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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY
1922

Two New Features

Beginning with the present issue we inaugurate two new editorial and art features of notable distinction. Each month an editorial

by
**THOMAS L.
MASSON**

the distinguished editor of *Life*, written in his characteristic vein of social satire, will be followed by a poem, pertinent to our times. In the present issue the poem is

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WALT MASON

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[Painted from life] by Haskell Coffin

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There is nothing fundamentally "different" about the man whose salary runs into five figures. He is made of the same stuff as you and I. It is not necessary that he must enjoy the privilege of some influential connection or "pull." For example, take J. P. Overstreet, of Dallas, Texas. A few short years ago he was a police officer earning less than \$1,000 a year. Today his earnings are in excess of \$10,000 a month—more than \$12,000 a year. C. W. Campbell, Greensburg, Pa., was formerly a railroad employee on a small salary—last month his earnings were \$1,562.

Why Salesmen Earn Such Big Pay

Just stop a moment and think over the successful men of your acquaintance. How many of them are connected with some form of selling? If you will study any business organization you will see that the big jobs go to the men who sell, for upon their efforts depend the profits a company makes. Without trained men to place a product on the market, the finest goods are worth no more than so much clay. Salesmen are the very nerve centers of a business. Is it any wonder that they earn big pay?

The man who starts working as a bookkeeper or clerk for \$25.00 a week, never increases his value to the firm. Any advance in pay is merely a reward for length of service. At the end of ten years he is no more essential to the life of the organization than he was at the end of ten weeks. He is only a necessary liability—drawing his pay because somebody must be found to work at the unimportant, routine jobs. Once established in the rut, he becomes a cog in the machine—when he is worn out, he can be easily and cheaply replaced.

Why Don't You Get Into the Selling Field?

Mr. Overstreet, Mr. Campbell and the others whose letters you see on this page are all successful salesmen. They realized their ambitions by landing \$10,000 jobs in an amazingly simple way, with the help and guidance of the National Salesmen's Training Association. Sometime—somewhere back in the past, each one of them read of this remarkable course of Salesmanship training and Employment Service just as you are reading of it today. Each one of them was dissatisfied with his earning capacity—as perhaps you are—and each one cast his lot with the N. S. T. A. Today they are important factors in the business world—enjoying all the comforts and

luxuries money can buy. And yet they are not exceptions, for there are thousands of N. S. T. A. trained salesmen who are making big money, as we will be only too glad to show you if you will mail the coupon.

We Train You and Help You Land a Job

The National Salesmen's Training Association is an organization of top-notch salesmen and sales managers formed for the express purpose of training men in the science of successful selling. You do not need to know the first thing about selling—for the N. S. T. A. trains you from the ground up—gives you a complete insight into selling methods—in your spare

time without making it necessary to give up your present position until you are ready to begin actual selling.

In addition to this remarkably efficient course of training, the N. S. T. A. maintain a Free Employment Service to help its members to jobs in the lines for which they are best suited. This in itself is of incalculable value for it allows the prospective salesman to make a complete survey of the selling field and to select the work which most appeals to him.

Salesmen Are Needed—Now!

Get out of that rut! Work for yourself! Salesmanship is the biggest paid of all professions. Just because you have never sold anything is no sign that you can't. We have made Star Salesmen of men from all walks of life, with no previous selling experience. These men have jumped from small pay jobs to big selling positions and handsome incomes. The same training on which they founded their success is open to you. You can follow in their footsteps. Why don't you get in a class with men who make real money? Never before have the opportunities been greater. At least you cannot afford not to investigate the great field of Selling and see what it offers you. It will only cost you a 2 cent stamp and the facts and proof you will receive will surprise you.

Free Book on Salesmanship

Just mail the coupon or write for our free illustrated Book, "A Knight of the Grip," which we will be glad to send without any obligation on your part. Let us prove to you that regardless of what you are doing now, you can quickly become a Star Salesman. Let us show you how you too can step into the ranks of these big money makers of business. See how easily you can learn this fascinating, big pay profession at home in your spare time. Learn what we have done for others and what we stand ready to do for you. Don't put it off until tomorrow—write us today. Every hour lost keeps you that much farther from success. Mail the coupon at once.

National Salesmen's Training Association
Dept. 22-B Chicago, Ill., U. S. A.

National Salesmen's Training Association
Dept. 22-B, Chicago, Ill., U. S. A.

Please send me, without any obligation on my part, your free Book, "A Knight of the Grip," and full information about the N. S. T. A. system of Salesmanship training and Employment Service. Also a list showing lines of business with openings for salesmen.

Name.....
Street.....
City.....

Read These Amazing Stories of Quick Success

Earned \$524 in Two Weeks

I had never earned more than \$60 a month. Last week I cleared \$306 and this week \$218. You have done wonders for me.—Geo. W. Kearns, 107 W. Park Place, Oklahoma City, Okla.

I Now Earn as High as \$100 a Day

I took your course two years ago. Was earning \$15 a week clerking. Am now selling many of the largest firms in the U. S. I have earned more than \$100 in a day. You secured me my position. Our Sales Manager is a graduate of yours.—J. L. DeBonis, 4615 Warwich Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Earns \$1,562 in Thirty Days

My earnings for the past thirty days are \$1,562, and I won Second Prize in March although I only worked two weeks during that month.—C. W. Campbell, Greensburg, Pa.

Earned \$1,800 in Six Weeks

As soon as I received a letter from you and your literature, I knew that I was on the right track and very soon after I applied for a position as a Salesman to one of the firms whom you informed me were in need of a Salesman and to whom you had recommended me. As soon as they received my application, which was by mail, they wired me to come for an appointment, which I did, with the result that I sold my services to them in about thirty minutes, took a territory in Illinois and Wisconsin and made a success of it from the very first week.

From that time on I have been what might be termed as a "high pressure" Salesman, selling lines where nine out of ten Order Takers would fail. I have sold goods in a highly successful manner in nine or ten States, both North and South. My earnings for March were over \$1,000 and over \$1,800 for the last six weeks, while last week my earnings were \$359.00. I travel eleven months out of the year, working five days each week.

The N. S. T. A. dug me out of a rut where I was earning less than \$1,000 a year and showed me how to make a success.—J. P. Overstreet, Dallas, Texas.



THOMAS L. MASSON
Editor of LIFE



Photo © by Lucia A. Weeks

THOMAS A. DALY

Two Famous Philosophers Who Will Greet You in Prose and Verse in the Next Issue of

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

Intelligent America knows Thomas L. Masson (T. L. M.), the satiric spirit behind "Life," whose first Red Book Magazine editorial appears in the present issue, and who, next month, will extend aid and comfort "to those of us who are not beautiful."

And everyone knows Tom A. Daly, poet of the new America, whose lilting verse is read wherever the English language is read, and whose genius gives him the power to look deep into the human heart. Mr. Daly's first Red Book Magazine poem, which will appear in the next, the March issue, will be stored away in the memory books of thousands of readers.

Thereafter, each month, social editorials by Mr. Masson, memory-haunting poems by Tom Daly, as well as editorials and verse by other distinguished American philosophers and poets, will be a regular feature of the Magazine.

These distinctive contributions in every instance, as in the present issue, will be pictorially interpreted by the greatest American artists, and will be printed in tint on a special quality of paper chosen to enhance the beauty of the presentation.

Thus are supplied two more reasons why no alert, wide-awake American man or woman can afford to miss, *any* issue of,

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

How Little Social Errors Ruined Their Biggest Chance

VIOLET CREIGHTON was proud of her husband. And she had reason to be. Six years ago he was at the very bottom of the ladder. Now he was almost near the top. One more decisive step—and they would be ready to step across the boundary, into the world of wealth, power and influence.

No wonder Ted was elated when he brought the good news home. "Well, Vi, it has come at last!" he beamed. "Crothers has left and I'm to have his place. I'm actually going to be one of the vice-presidents of the company."

Violet was duly surprised—and delighted. "The wife of an officer of the company," she laughed. "Sounds good, doesn't it?" and together they planned for the wonderful days to come, of the big things he would accomplish and the charming functions of which she would be hostess. Yet beneath their happy planning was a subtle, unexpressed fear which both realized—yet which both ignored.

An Invitation Is Received

The next evening, Ted brought even bigger news. They were to dine at the Brandon home—actually be the guests of William Brandon! Violet knew how happy Ted must be, how he had dreamed of and longed for this very opportunity. Yet, when he told her of the dinner invitation, there was a sudden tug of pain at her heart.

Oh, she was happy enough, and proud that Ted had reached his goal. But were they ready for it—would they enter their new social sphere gracefully and with a cultured charm, or would they make a blundering mess of it? She was afraid. She knew that failure now would hurt more than ever. And, with a woman's instinct, she knew that there was something Ted and she lacked.

"But do you think you should have accepted, Ted?" she queried. "You know how elaborately the Brandons entertain, and how—well, formal they are. Why, I don't even know whether it is correct for me to wear an evening gown!"

Ted was silent for a moment. "I couldn't possibly refuse," he said slowly. "We'll simply have to see it through. Mr. Brandon wants to have a long chat with me before the final arrangements are made. But I'll admit I'm kind of worried myself. Now, do you suppose I may wear a dinner jacket or must I wear full dress?"

For the first time, the Creightons realized that there was something more than business status if they were ever to be real successes—they realized that personality, culture and social charm played an important part. And they felt keenly their lack of social knowledge, their ignorance as to what was correct and what was incorrect.

"I hope we don't make any bad breaks," Ted whispered, as they drew up before the Brandon mansion. And way down deep inside, Violet made a secret vow that she would try to be at her best tonight, to be polished and well-poised and impressive—for Ted's sake.

Bad Mistakes Are Made

They reached the Brandon home immediately before the arrival of Mr. Roberts and his wife. There was a certain tacit understanding that if anything prevented Ted from stepping into the vacancy Mr. Roberts would take his place. He was a



He knew that the others were watching them, reading in their embarrassment their lack of social knowledge.

severely dignified gentleman, and his wife had a certain distinction that immediately commanded respect and admiration. Violet was embarrassed when introductions were made and mumbled a mechanical, "Pleased to meet you" several times. She wished she had prepared something brilliant to say.

Violet sat between Mr. Brandon and Mr. Roberts at the table. From the very first she felt uncomfortably ill at ease. Ted, sitting opposite her, was uncomfortable and embarrassed, too. He felt out of place, confused. Mr. Brandon immediately launched into a long discourse on the influence of women in politics, and under cover of his conversation the first two courses of the dinner passed rather pleasantly.

But then, something happened. Violet noticed that Mrs. Roberts had glanced at her husband and frowned ever so slightly. She wondered what was wrong. Perhaps it was incorrect to cut lettuce with a knife. Perhaps Ted should not have used his fork that way. In her embarrassment she dropped her knife and bent down to pick it up at the same time that the butler did. Oh, it was humiliating, unbearable! They should never have come. They didn't know what to do, how to act.

Mr. Brandon was speaking again. Ted was apparently listening with rapt attention, but inwardly he was burning with fierce resentment. It was unfair to expect him to be a polished gentleman when he had had no training! It wasn't right to judge a man by his table manners! But—why did Violet seem so clumsy with her knife and fork? Why couldn't she be as graceful and charming as Mrs. Roberts? He was embarrassed, horribly uncomfortable. If he could only concentrate on what Mr. Brandon was saying, instead of trying to avoid mistakes!

The Creightons Suffer Keen Humiliation

Violet, sitting opposite, listened quietly to the conversation. She wished that Mrs. Roberts would not watch her, that she would not make any more mistakes, that the ordeal would soon be over. The butler stopped at her side with a dish of olives. . . .

"I say, Creighton, are you listening to me or not?" With a start, Ted turned toward his host. He had not been listening. He had not been paying attention. How could he, when directly opposite him, before all the guests, his wife was taking olives with a fork! Violet glanced up and saw the look of horror in his eyes. She crimsoned, became embarrassed. But though Mr. Brandon seemed mildly surprised and Mrs. Roberts seemed very near the verge of smiling, the incident was smoothed over and conversation began once again.

For Ted, the evening was irretrievably spoiled. He knew that the others were watching Violet and him, reading in their embarrassment their lack of social knowledge, condemning them as ill-bred and uncultured. But when the ladies rose from the table to retire to the drawing-room, and he rose to follow, he knew by the amused glances of the others that they had hopelessly failed, that they had socially disgraced themselves.

He wasn't surprised, then, when Mr. Brandon remarked, after the other guests had left and Violet had stepped into the next room for her wraps, "I'm sorry, Creighton, but I've decided to consider Roberts for the vacancy. I need a man whose social position is assured, who can meet men of any position on their own footing. The executives in our company must be able to make a good impression wherever they go, and they must be the type of men one instinctively trusts and respects."

An Opportunity Is Lost, but a New One Is Found

At home that night, Violet refused to be comforted. "It was all my fault—I have spoiled your

best chance," she cried. But Ted knew that he was as much to blame as she.

"Another chance is bound to come," he said, "and we'll be ready for it. I'm going to buy a reliable, authoritative book of etiquette at once."

It was only when the famous Book of Etiquette was in her hands, and she saw how easy it was to acquire the social knowledge, the social poise and dignity they needed, that Violet was happy again. They would never make embarrassing blunders again. They would never be humiliated again. Here was the very information they needed—clear, definite, interesting information that told them just what to do, say, write and wear on all occasions, under all conditions!

Ted and Violet read parts of the Book of Etiquette together every evening. It revealed to them all the mistakes they had made at the Brandon home and told them exactly what they should have done. It was positively a revelation! By the time they had finished that splendid book they knew that they would ever after be well poised and at ease even in the company of the most brilliant celebrities!

The Importance of the Book of Etiquette to YOU

The Book of Etiquette is recognized as one of the most dependable and up-to-date authorities on the conduct of good society. It has shown thousands of men and women how to meet embarrassing moments with calm dignity, how to be always at ease, how to do, say, write, and wear always what is absolutely correct. It has made it possible for people everywhere to master quickly the secrets of social charm, enabling them to mingle with the most highly cultured people and feel entirely at ease. In the Book of Etiquette, now published in two large library volumes, you will find valuable and interesting information on every question of social import. The entire subject of etiquette is covered completely, exhaustively. Nothing is omitted, nothing forgotten. You learn everything—from the correct amount to tip the porter in a foreign country to the proper way to eat corn on the cob. Wherever old traditions are attached to present conventions, they are revealed—why the bride wears a veil, why calling cards are used, why ostrich plumes are worn at Court. Every phase of etiquette has been brought up to date, and no detail, no matter how slight, has been omitted.

Five-Day FREE Examination

We would like to send you the famous Book of Etiquette free for 5 days, so that you can examine it at leisure in your own home. There is no obligation, no cost to you. Simply fill in the coupon and mail it to us at once. The complete, two-volume set of the Book of Etiquette will be promptly sent to you, and you have the privilege of examining and reading it at our expense for 5 days.

The Book of Etiquette is published in two handsome library volumes, bound in cloth and richly decorated in gold. Each volume contains interesting and valuable information that will be of permanent use to you—whenever you come into contact with men and women. Don't overlook this opportunity to examine this remarkable set without cost—mail the coupon NOW.

Within the 5-day examination period, decide whether or not you want to keep the Book of Etiquette. You have the privilege of returning the set to us within the 5 days, or keeping it and sending us only \$3.50 in full payment. But remember, that this places you under no obligation—you may return the Book of Etiquette to us without hesitation if for any reason you are not delighted with it. Clip the coupon and send it off today! Address Nelson Doubleday, Inc., Dept. 52, Oyster Bay, L. I., N. Y.

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Without money in advance, or obligation on my part, send me the two-volume set of the Book of Etiquette. Within 5 days I will either return the books or send you only \$3.50 in full payment. It is understood that I am not obligated to keep the books if I am not delighted with them.

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Mary Garden
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Fragrant with Parfum Mary Garden

A TOUCH of MARY GARDEN ROUGE—a puff of just the shade of MARY GARDEN POWDER that blends with your coloring—and yours is the bloom that vies with the petals of a rosebud.

Both are delicately fragrant with exquisite PARFUM MARY GARDEN—the perfume of youth and beauty.

*Send for a Bijou Box of MARY GARDEN FACE POWDER
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Enclosed is 10 cents for which please send me your
Bijou Box of Mary Garden Face Powder.

Name _____

Address _____



Old King Cole loved
the Mint with a Hole,
"I enjoy Life Savers,"
said he;
"One after my pipe,
two after my bowl,
They're always Lifesavers
to me."

Pep-O-mint

W'int-O-green

Lic-O-ri-ce

Cl-O-ver

Cinn-O-mon



NAN HALPERIN
In "The Midnight Rounders"
Photograph by Daguerre Studio, Chicago



KATHERINE McDONALD

Film Play Star

Photograph by C. Heighton Monroe, Los Angeles



CORRINE GRIFFITH

Film Play Star

Photograph by Ira L. Hill's Studio, New York

Beautiful Women



KATHERINE SPENCER

Film Play Star

Photograph by Apeida, New York




LOUISE LORRAINE
Film Play Star
Photograph by Freulich, Los Angeles

Beautiful Women



MISS ESTELL TAYLOR
Film Play Star
Photograph copyright by Lumiere, New York






HANGING ON

By WALT MASON


Decoration by FREDERICK J. GARNER



G. WASHINGTON was feeling sad; he'd met a new reverse, and things around him looked so bad they couldn't well be worse. Each hour was bringing bitter news, to worry and confound; his patriots were lacking shoes, though snow was on the ground. And all the land was tired of war, and windsmiths to him came, and asked, "What are you fighting for? Why don't you quit the game? The Britishers have got our goat, and if 'twere not for you, we'd sound the loud surrender note, and back out, P. D. Q." G. Washington upraised his head and told them to begone. "We'll just hang on a while," he said, "and keep on hanging on."

Q To every man there comes a day when fears around him stand; success seems vague and far away, and failure close at hand. He asks himself, "What is the use of trying any more? The Fates, it seems, have cooked my goose, and effort is a bore. Ambition is a thing for fools; the guerdon is denied; and so I'll lay aside my tools, and let the whole thing slide."

Q The weaker chaps will reason thus, and give up in despair, and rail at fate and make a fuss, and wring their hands and hair. How many greatly gifted men have missed a high renown, have thrown away the poet's pen, or cast the chisel down, because they would not strive ahead until they saw the dawn, would not through difficulties tread, and keep on hanging on?



Q The men who keep no goal in view will seldom make a hit; the men who make their dreams come true are those who never quit. So here's the formula, my friends, of fortune and renown, the way to gain your fondest ends, and nail the victor's crown. Faint Heart may have the fairest gifts, but courage in him dies, and while he hesitates and drifts, Strong Heart will gain the prize. Strong Heart will not confess defeat until his life is gone; and so he reaches Easy Street who keeps on hanging on.



Fernand Botto -

J a z z

By THOMAS L. MASSON

Editor of LIFE

Decoration by FRANKLIN BOOTH

THERE is a Baby now standing before the portals of Life who is already beginning to inquire what kind of entertainment has been provided for him. He is not alone. Many others will arrive with him. He is not coming as a guest, but as one of the allotted members of a large world family. He is not a volunteer. Whoever it is that makes the arrangements for keeping the earth populated has not invited, but has commanded, him to enter. Under the conscription act made valid how many thousands of years ago nobody knows, he has been drafted to serve as a human being under the general orders "Man's Allotted Time." From the moment that he utters his opening yell until, either amid the plaudits or the curses of the multitude, he makes his final exit, he is under sealed orders. He doesn't always realize this. At first, with the charming but often distressing innocence of the amateur, he thinks he can have his own way. He spills the milk from his bottle with delightful irresponsibility. He makes mud-pie masterpieces with the unconscious air of true genius, and destroys them with the certainty of one who knows that all the powers of the Universe are flowing through him. He looks into the eyes of Woman, and loves and suffers, and suffers and loves again and learns at last (if he is lucky) that true laughter is the offspring of Pain, that Patience and Persistence have been his great angels, that too much Prosperity may be the prelude of impotence, that Failure is more interesting than Success, and that a good story, well told, is often more constructive than a sermon.

¶ The newcomer learns these things afterwards, and much more. But NOW, at this precious moment in world history, before he is ushered in, has he not a right to ask of us what we have done for him?

¶ And how proud we are in our reply! Young Sir, we might have given you Peace, but what is Peace in a world where it has so long been admitted that Man is a fighting animal, and therefore needs a struggle to keep him going? We have given you Science; Science provides us with pretty pictures, with delightful pleasures, with swift means of communication and transport and with many engaging diseases. We might, and we have, given you some Art and Literature and Music and Sport, but how incidental are all of these petty things to the magnificent thing that we are giving you! Bring out the royal platter, for only on a golden platter should this great gift be presented to the newcomer.

¶ For here is JAZZ — Jazz that trips lightly among the starved infants of Europe and China, Jazz that lies so lightly on the lips of diplomats in secret session, with its open-face air; Jazz that lingers in alcoves and mingles with the buzz of divorce courts; Jazz that, with its magic wand, transforms Honesty into a Wanton, syncopates the utensils of the kitchen and casts its spell alike over the councils of the just and the unjust.

¶ Some world periods, not so generous as ours, would have presented you with a little jazz, just enough to give an air of abandon to the whole. We know better than that. Our wiseacres have taught us better than that. We are nothing if not complete; we aim at ultimate perfection. And so here is our World ready and waiting for you, a world all of JAZZ, soaked with JAZZ, saturated with JAZZ. Gaze upon it with awe. Look upon it with gratitude. It is our golden gift to you, the coming generation. And make the most of it. It is the very best that we could do for you!





A Beauty Secret 3,000 Years Old

The use of palm and olive oils to keep the skin fresh and smooth is nothing new, but a secret known to pretty girls since Cleopatra's time. Her Palmolive came in vessels and jars, and she had to do her own mixing. But the beautifying cleanser she achieved was the inspiration of the mild, soothing blend science produces today.

Take a lesson from Cleopatra, who kept her youthful beauty long after girlhood's days had passed. She used cosmetics to embellish and enhance her charm, just as women do today. But the foundation was a skin thoroughly and healthfully cleansed from all clogging and dangerous accumulations.

Perfected for washing faces

Palmolive is blended from the same palm and olive oils Cleopatra used—they are the mildest, most soothing ingredients science has been able to discover.

The scientific combination of these rare oils produces a smooth, creamy, lotion-like lather. Palmolive soothes and beautifies while

it cleanses. It keeps the skin of the face and body beautifully soft and smooth.

The importance of thorough cleansing

It is absolutely essential to complexion beauty to wash your face thoroughly once a day. Palmolive makes this cleansing doubly beneficial by its mildness.

The profuse, creamy lather penetrates each tiny pore, removing the deposits of dirt, oil and perspiration which cause clogging and enlargement. Such cleansing is the secret of fresh, smooth skins, as results prove.

Don't neglect the body

Care of the complexion only begins with the face. Neck, arms and shoulders should be kept white and smooth.

Use Palmolive for bathing and these results are accomplished. It does for your body what it does for the face.

If this seems an extravagance, remember the modest price. The firm, long-wearing cake of generous size costs but ten cents.

Our price secret

If Palmolive were made in small quantities it would be a very expensive soap. Palm and olive oils are costly soap ingredients, and come from overseas.

But the popularity which requires enormous production has reduced the price to that of ordinary soaps. 25-cent quality is offered for 10 cents.

THE PALMOLIVE COMPANY
Milwaukee, U. S. A.

THE PALMOLIVE COMPANY OF CANADA, Limited
Toronto, Ontario

Makers of a complete line of toilet articles

**Volume and efficiency produce
25-cent quality for**

10c



The Magazine of a Remade World

F I D D L E S

A Common-sense Editorial by
BRUCE BARTON

AT a recent dinner in New York a certain man found himself seated beside a great comedian. "I want to thank you for all the happiness you have given me, Sir Harry," the man remarked. "I have looked forward to your American performances as one of the real joys of my life."

There was no suggestion of the jester in Harry Lauder's response. "Don't thank me, laddie," he said earnestly. "God put something into me that seems to give pleasure to many thousand people. What it is I don't know, nor where it came from, nor when it may go. I don't seem to control it; it seems to control me. Thank *it*, whatever it is—not me."

Perhaps that sounds a bit theatrical to you; perhaps you imagine that it is the habit of prominent men to pretend to more modesty than they actually possess.

I do not think so. Most biographies betray a certain sense of humility on the part of the great man—of wonder in the presence of his own success.

When John Bunyan was congratulated on the effectiveness of his sermons, he uttered Harry Lauder's protest in different words.

"I am only God's fiddle!" he exclaimed, "the instrument on which He has elected to play His tunes."

We have the word of Lincoln's closest associates that he never thought of himself as an extraordinary man. Theodore N. Vail, in meeting strangers, was as bashful as a boy.

I was discussing this subject not long ago with an editor who has known every successful writer of the last twenty-five years. He mentioned the name of one man whom the world ranks as a genius. He told how that man *hated* to write; how he would procrastinate to the very last moment, and then, locking himself in a room, sit down at a table, clutch a pencil and hold it desperately to the sheet.

From somewhere would come those wonderful thoughts. The genius, finishing his task, would emerge from the room completely exhausted, as though some Power, not himself, had seized hold on him and compelled him to be the unwilling instrument of Its will.

"A writer," said my editor friend, "is only God's stenographer. Where do his thoughts come from? He does not know. They come; one day they *don't* come. The glory has departed. God has discharged him without previous notice and hired another man."

BECAUSE great men feel that there is something inexplicable about their careers—call it luck, or Providence, or what you will—there is usually a surprising simplicity about them. That is an almost invariable mark of real greatness.

Almost but not *quite* invariable! Occasionally you *do* meet a really great fiddle that thinks it is Ole Bull or a really great stenographer who thinks he is God.

Another of Bruce Barton's Common-sense Editorials will appear on this page in the next issue of The Red Book Magazine.



15 washings

Actual photograph of hand-made bedspread —unstreaked and unfaded after 15 Ivory Flakes washings. Spread and statement of original owner on file in the Procter & Gamble offices.

—yet the creamy tint of this bedspread, and the pinks and greens of its hand applique and embroidery are as pretty as new—

THE Illinois woman who sent in the bedspread in the photograph to the manufacturers of Ivory Flakes described the washing in this way:

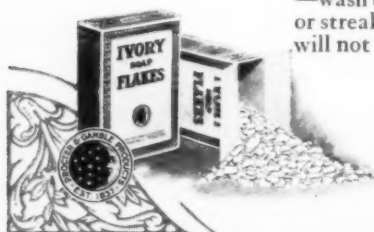
"In laundering this spread I always used water just warm enough for the hands, and beat the Ivory Flakes to a lather and let the bedspread soak for several minutes, after which I rubbed it lightly between the hands and rinsed it in water the same temperature as the suds".

What Ivory Flakes has done for this spread it will do just as easily for your embroidered linens, cretonnes, hangings, cushion covers, and counterpanes—wash them repeatedly without fading or streaking any color that water alone will not harm.

The beauty about Ivory Flakes is that it enables you to enjoy using your loveliest household linens all the time without fear that they will be ruined in the washtub. The Ivory Flakes way of cleansing them is so easy that you can do it yourself, even if you never have washed anything in your life before.

Ivory Flakes gives you the proven purity and safety of Ivory Soap in instant working, rubless form. Try it—see how much better you will like it for all your "special" washing, whether it is a georgette blouse that just needs a dipping in the bathroom washbowl, or the colorful cretonne curtains from the sun porch.

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KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN, *Editor*



The Old Maid

By Edith Wharton

Illustrated by Arthur I. Keller

IN the old New York of the 'thirties a few families ruled, in simplicity and affluence. Of these were the Ralstons. The sturdy English and the rubicund and heavier Dutch had mingled to produce a prosperous, prudent and yet lavish society. To "do things handsomely" had always been a fundamental principle in this cautious world, built up on the fortunes of bankers, India merchants, shipbuilders and ship-chandlers. Those well-fed, slow-moving people, who seemed irri-

table and dyspeptic to European eyes only because the caprices of the climate had stripped them of superfluous flesh, and strung their nerves a little tighter, lived in a genteel monotony of which the surface was never stirred by the dumb dramas now and then enacted underground. Sensitive souls in those days were like muted keyboards, on which Fate played without a sound.

In this compact society, built of solidly welded blocks, one of the largest areas was filled by the Ralstons and their rami-

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Charlotte answered in a low voice: "There is no time. I must decide now. . . . Where are you

fications. The Ralstons were of middle-class English stock. They had not come to the colonies to die for a creed but to live for a bank-account. The result had been beyond their hopes, and their religion was tinged by their success. An edulcorated Church of England which, under the conciliatory name of the "Episcopal Church of the United States of America," left out the coarser allusions in the Marriage Service, slid over the comminatory passages in the Athanasian Creed, and thought it more respectful to say "Our Father *who*" than "*which*" in the Lord's Prayer, was exactly suited to the spirit of compromise whereon the Ralstons had built themselves up. There was in all the tribe the same instinctive recoil from new religions as from unaccounted-for people. Institutional to the core, they represented the conservative element that holds new societies together as sea-plants bind the seashore.

Compared with the Ralstons, even such traditionalists as the Lovells, the Halseys or the Vandergraves appeared careless, indifferent to money, almost reckless in their impulses and indecisions. Old John Frederick Ralston, the stout founder of the race, had perceived the difference, and emphasized it to his son, Frederick John, in whom he had scented a faint leaning toward the untried and unprofitable.

"You let the Lannings and the Dagonets and the Spenders take risks and fly kites. It's the county-family blood in 'em:

we've nothing to do with that. Look how they're petering out already—the men, I mean. Let your boys marry their girls, if you like (they're wholesome and handsome); though I'd sooner see my grandsons take a Lovell or a Vandergrave, than any of our own kind. But don't let your sons go mooning around with their young fellows, horse-racing, and running down south to those damned springs, and gambling at New Orleans, and all the rest of it. That's how you'll build up the family, and keep the weather out. The way we've always done it."

Frederick John listened, obeyed, married a Halsey, and passively followed in his father's steps. He belonged to the cautious generation of New York gentlemen who revered Hamilton and served Jefferson, who longed to lay out New York like Washington, and who laid it out instead like a gridiron, lest they should be thought "undemocratic" by people they secretly looked down upon. Shopkeepers to the marrow, they put in their windows the wares there was most demand for, keeping their private opinions for the back-shop, where, through lack of use, they gradually lost substance and color.

The present generation of Ralstons had nothing left in the way of convictions save an acute sense of honor in private and business matters; on the life of the community and the state they took their daily views from the newspapers, and the newspapers they already despised. They themselves had done little to shape



going?" "I don't know," Delia answered. "I want to walk want to be alone you'll wait?"

the destiny of their country, except to finance the Cause when it had become safe to do so. They were related to many of the great men who had built the Republic; but no Ralston had so far committed himself as to be great. As old John Frederick said, it was safer to be satisfied with three per cent; they regarded heroism as a form of gambling. Yet by merely being so numerous and so similar they had come to have a weight in the community. People said, "The Ralstons," when they wished to invoke a precedent. This attribution of authority had gradually convinced the third generation of its collective importance; and the fourth, to which Delia Ralston's husband belonged, had the ease and simplicity of a ruling class.

Within the limits of their universal caution, the Ralstons fulfilled their obligations as rich and respected citizens. They figured on the boards of all the old-established charities, gave handsomely to thriving institutions, had the best cooks in New York, and when they traveled abroad ordered statuary of the American sculptors in Rome whose reputation was already made. The first Ralston who had brought home a statue had been regarded as a wild fellow; but when it became known that the sculptor had executed several orders for the British aristocracy, it was felt in the family that this too was a three-per-cent investment.

Two marriages with the Dutch Vandergraves had consolidated these qualities of thrift and handsome living, and the carefully

built-up Ralston character was now so congenital that Delia Ralston sometimes asked herself whether, were she to turn her own little boy loose in a wilderness, he would not create a small New York there, and be on all its boards of directors.

Delia Lovell had married James Ralston at twenty. The marriage, which had taken place in the month of September, 1840, had been solemnized, as was then the custom, in the drawing-room of the bride's country home, at what is now the corner of Avenue A and Ninety-first Street, overlooking the Sound. Thence her husband had driven her (in Grandmamma Lovell's canary-colored coach with a fringed hammer-cloth), through spreading suburbs and untidy elm-shaded streets, to one of the new houses in Gramercy Park, which the pioneers of the younger set were just beginning to affect; and there, at five-and-twenty, she was established, the mother of two children, the possessor of a generous allowance of pin-money, and, by common consent, one of the handsomest and most popular "young matrons" (as they were called) of her day.

She was thinking placidly and gratefully of these things as she sat one day in her handsome bedroom in Gramercy Park. She was too near to the primitive Ralstons to have as clear a view of them as, for instance, the son in question might one day command: she lived under them as unthinkingly as one lives under the laws of one's country. Yet that tremor in her of the

muted keyboard, that secret questioning which sometimes beat in her like wings, would now and then so divide her from them that for a fleeting moment she could survey them in their relation to other things. The moment was always fleeting; she dropped back from it quickly, breathless and a little pale, to her children, her housekeeping, her new dresses and her kindly Jim.

She thought of him today with a smile of tenderness, remembering how he had told her to spare no expense on her new bonnet. Though she was twenty-five, and twice a mother, her image was still surprisingly fresh. The plumpness then thought seemly in a young matron stretched the gray silk across her bosom, and caused her heavy gold watch-chain—after it left the anchorage of the brooch of St. Peter's in mosaic that fastened her low-cut Cluny collar—to dangle perilously in the void, above a tiny waisted buckled into a velvet waist-band. But the shoulders above sloped youthfully under her Cashmere scarf, and every movement was as quick as a girl's.

MRS. RALSTON approvingly examined the rosy-cheeked oval set in the blonde ruffles of the bonnet on which, in compliance with her husband's instructions, she had spared no expense. It was a cabriolet of white velvet tied with wide satin ribbons and plumed with a crystal-spangled marabout—a wedding bonnet ordered for the marriage of her cousin, Charlotte Lovell, which was to take place that week at St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie. Charlotte was making a match exactly like Delia's own: marrying a Ralston, of the Waverley Place branch, than which nothing could be safer, sounder or more—well, usual. Delia did not know why the word had occurred to her, for it could hardly be postulated, even of the young women of her own narrow clan, that they "usually" married Ralstons; but the soundness, safeness, suitability of the arrangement, did make it typical of the kind of alliance which a nice girl in the nicest set would serenely and blushfully forecast for herself.

Yes—and afterward?

Well—what? And what did this new question mean? Afterward: why, of course, there was the startled, unprepared surrender to the incomprehensible exigencies of the young man to whom one had at most accorded a rosy cheek in return for an engagement ring; there was the large double bed; the terror of seeing him shaving calmly the next morning, in his shirt-sleeves, through the dressing-room door; the evasions, insinuations, resigned smiles and Bible texts of one's Mamma; the reminder of the phrase "to obey" in the glittering blur of the Marriage Service; a week or a month of flushed distress, confusion, embarrassed pleasure; then the growth of habit, the insidious lulling of the matter-of-course, dreamless double slumbers in the big white bed, early-morning discussions and consultations through that dressing-room door which had once seemed to open into a fiery pit scorching the brow of innocence.

And then, the babies; the babies who were supposed to "make up for everything," and didn't—though they were such darlings, and one had no definite notion as to what it was that one had missed, and that they were to make up for.

Yes: Charlotte's fate would be just like hers. Joe Ralston was so like his second cousin Jim (Delia's James), that Delia could see no reason why life in the squat brick house in Waverley Place should not exactly resemble life in the tall brownstone house in Gramercy Park. Only, Charlotte's bedroom would certainly not be as pretty as hers.

SHE glanced complacently at the French wall-paper that reproduced a watered silk, with a "valanced" border and tassels between the loops. The mahogany bedstead, covered with a white embroidered counterpane, was symmetrically reflected in the mirror of the wardrobe that matched it. Colored lithographs of the "Four Seasons" by Léopold Robert surmounted groups of family daguerreotypes in deeply recessed gilt frames. The ormolu clock represented a shepherdess sitting on a fallen trunk, a basket of flowers at her feet. A shepherd, stealing up, surprised her with a kiss, while her little dog barked at him from a clump of roses. One knew the profession of the lovers by their crooks and the shape of their hats. This frivolous timepiece had been a wedding-gift from Delia's aunt, Mrs. Manson Mingott, a dashing widow who lived in Paris and was received at the Tuileries. It had been intrusted by her to young Clement Spender, who had come back from Italy for a short holiday just after Delia's marriage; the marriage which might never have been, if Clem Spender could have supported a wife, or had consented to give up painting and Rome for New York and the law. The young man (who looked, already, so odd and foreign and sarcastic) had laughingly assured

the bride that her aunt's gift was "the newest thing in the Palais Royal;" and the family, who admired Mrs. Manson Mingott's taste, though they disapproved of her "foreignness," had criticized Delia's putting the clock in her bedroom instead of displaying it on the drawing-room mantel. But she liked, when she woke in the morning, to see the bold shepherd stealing his kiss.

Charlotte would certainly not have such a pretty clock in her bedroom; but then, she had not been used to pretty things. Her father, who had died at thirty of lung-fever, was one of the "poor Lovells." His widow, burdened with a young family, and living all the year round "up the River," could not do much for her eldest girl; and Charlotte had entered society in her mother's turned garments, and shod with satin sandals handed down from a defunct great-aunt who had "opened a ball" with General Washington. The old-fashioned Ralston furniture, which Delia already saw herself gradually banishing, would seem sumptuous to Chatty; very likely she would think Delia's gay French timepiece somewhat frivolous, or even "not quite nice." Poor Charlotte had become so serious, so prudish almost, since she had given up balls and taken to visiting the poor! Delia remembered, with ever-recurring wonder, the abrupt change in her: the precise moment at which it had been privately agreed in the family that, after all, Charlotte Lovell was going to be an old maid.

They had not thought so when she came out. Though her mother could not afford to give her more than one new tarlatan dress, and though nearly everything in her appearance was regrettable, from the too bright red of her hair to the too pale brown of her eyes,—not to mention the rounds of brick-rose on her cheek-bones, which almost (preposterous thought!) made her look as if she painted,—yet these defects were redeemed by a slim waist, a light foot and a gay laugh; and when her hair was well oiled and brushed for an evening party, so that it looked almost brown, and lay smoothly along her delicate cheeks, under a wreath of red and white camellias, several eligible young men (Joe Ralston among them) were known to have called her pretty.

THEN came her illness. She caught cold on a moonlight sleighing-party; the brick-rose circles deepened, and she began to cough. There was a report that she was "going like her father," and she was hurried off to a remote village in Georgia, where she lived alone for a year with an old family governess. When she came back, every one felt at once that there was a change in her. She was pale, and thinner than ever, but with an exquisitely transparent cheek, darker eyes and redder hair; and the oddness of her appearance was increased by plain dresses of Quakerish cut. She had left off trinkets and watch-chains, always wore the same gray cloak and small close bonnet, and displayed a sudden zeal for visiting the poor. The family explained that during her year in the South she had been shocked by the hopeless degradation of the "poor whites" and their children, and that this revelation of misery had made it impossible for her to return to the light-hearted life of her contemporaries. Everyone agreed, with an exchange of significant glances, that this unnatural state of mind would "pass off in time;" and meanwhile old Mrs. Lovell, Chatty's grandmother, who understood her perhaps better than the others, gave her a little money for her paupers, and lent her a room in the Lovell stables (at the back of the old Mercer Street house) where she gathered about her, in what would afterward have been called a "day-nursery," some of the poor children of the neighborhood.

There was even, among them, the baby girl whose origin had excited such intense curiosity in the neighborhood two or three years earlier, when a veiled lady in handsome clothes had brought it to the hovel of Cyrus Washington, the negro handy-man whose wife Jessamine took in Dr. Lanskell's washing. Dr. Lanskell was the chief practitioner of the day, and presumably versed in the secret history of every household from the Battery to Union Square; but though beset by inquisitive patients, he had invariably declared himself unable to identify Jessamine's "veiled lady," or to hazard a guess as to the origin of the hundred-dollar bill pinned to the baby's cloak.

The hundred dollars were never renewed; the lady never reappeared; but the baby lived healthily and happily with Jessamine's pickaninnies, and as soon as it could toddle, was brought to Chatty Lovell's day nursery, where it appeared (like its fellow-paupers) in little garments cut down from her old dresses, and socks knitted by her untiring hands. Delia, absorbed in her own babies, had nevertheless dropped in once or twice at the nursery, and had come away wishing that Chatty's maternal instinct might find its normal outlet in marriage and motherhood. The married cousin confusedly felt that her own affection for her handsome



She stood up, trembling. . . . Joe clutched the back of his chair. . . . "My God!" Jim stammered. "But you know you've got to pull yourself together, old boy."

children was a mild and measured sentiment compared with Chatty's fierce passion for the plebeian waifs in Grandmamma Lovell's stable.

And then, to the general surprise, Charlotte Lovell engaged herself to Joe Ralston. It was known that Joe had "admired her" the year she came out. She was a graceful dancer, and Joe, who was tall and nimble, had footed it with her through many a reel and Schottisch. By the end of the winter all the match-makers were predicting that something would come of it; but when Delia playfully sounded her cousin, the girl's evasive answer and burning brow seemed to imply that her suitor had changed his mind, and no more questions had been asked. Now it became evident that there had, in fact, been an old romance, probably

followed by that exciting incident, a "misunderstanding;" but at last all was well, and the bells of St. Mark's were about to ring in happier days for Charlotte. "Ah, when she has her first baby," the Ralston mothers chorused.

"CHATTY!" Delia exclaimed, pushing back her chair as she saw her cousin's image reflected in the glass over her shoulder.

Charlotte Lovell had paused in the doorway. "They told me you were here—so I ran up."

"Of course, darling. How handsome you do look in your poplin! I always said you needed rich materials. I'm so thankful to see you out of brown cashmere." (Continued on page 120)

*The Pursuit of an Arch Criminal by
a Master Detective*

The Leeds Bank Robbery

By E. Phillips Oppenheim

Illustrated by W. B. King

MICHAEL SAYERS, arch criminal of many aliases and disguises, was about to be arrested by the one police-officer who could recognize him, when his maid-servant Janet Soames shot and killed the officer and thus saved him. Thereafter Janet, a girl of strange beauty, became Sayers' accomplice. The forces of the law also received important reinforcement when Sir Norman Greyes, formerly of Scotland Yard, went back to his old calling and sought to pick up the trail of Sayers, whom he had known under the alias of Stanfield. How he accomplished this is told in this story, related at first in Sayers' own words:



Michael Sayers

IT had taken months to collect all the necessary information and make the preliminary arrangements, but the moment had arrived at last. At twenty minutes to twelve on a Friday morning, I descended from a rather shabby Ford car exactly opposite Bailey's grocery stores at the corner of Menwood Road, in one of the northern suburbs of Leeds. It is a neighborhood of six-roomed houses and long, cobbled streets, a neighborhood teeming with men and women when the great factories close at hand are empty; but at this particular hour of the day, when the children are at school, and the men, and many of the women, are still in the mills, it shows signs of something approaching desertion. There was a handsome gray touring landaulette containing two passengers, a man and a woman, drawn up on the other side of the way, apparently to take advantage of the shade of some tall billboards while the chauffeur filled up with petrol. Otherwise—as a careful glance up and down the street convinced me—not a soul was in sight.

I walked along a hot asphalt path and turned the corner into what was known as the Boulevard, almost unnoticed. On my left was a stretch of waste-ground, black and with malodorous refuse, empty tins and bottles, abandoned even by the children as an undesirable playground. On my right were more houses in course of erection, but today deserted because of an opportune strike amongst the masons. The only inhabited edifice was the one where my business lay. A brass plate upon the door indicated that this was a branch of Brown's Bank, planted out here in this uncomely spot for the convenience of the huge factories which dominated the neighborhood.

With my hand upon the swing-door I glanced around. My luck was certainly in, for there was still not even a child to be seen. Inside, behind the counter, both the manager and his clerk were busy counting out bundles of treasury-notes. They looked up inquiringly as I entered. Strangers in such a place, I imagine, were rare. Such a stranger as I was a rarity which they were never likely to experience again in this world.

My plans were cut and dried to the last detail. I wasted no time in any silly attempt to hold the place up, but brief though the seconds were, it was amazing how my brain chronicled a host of varying impressions. I saw the bland smile fade from the manager's lips; I saw the dawn of suspicion in his eyes, the gleam of terror followed by the spasm of pain as I shot him through the right shoulder-blade. His assistant had not the courage of a rabbit. White-faced, gasping for mercy, he stood there with his hands above his head and his knees shaking. I am convinced that if I had left him alone for another five seconds, he would have collapsed hopelessly without any interference on my part. I was not able to take risks, however; so, leaning over, I struck him on the point of the jaw. He fell in a crumpled heap behind the counter. I then helped myself to seven thousand-odd pounds in bank- and treasury-notes, and in about a minute and a half after I had entered the bank, I strolled back again the way I had come.



The chauffeur, the police-sergeant and I solemnly inspected the number-plate. "That will be all right now, Sergeant?" I inquired.

At the corner of the street, I looked back. There were no signs of life about the bank, no one apparently on his way toward it. There were a few children playing about the unoccupied houses, and behind the windows of the cottages in the street where I now was, were women intent upon various domestic duties. One woman was scolding her child just outside the door. She glanced at me only in the most perfunctory fashion. My Panama hat was pulled well over my head, a reasonable precaution, with the sun at its greatest power. A man was bending over the open bonnet of the car which I had left at the corner. I passed him by without a glance and stepped into the gray touring-car behind. The engine was purring gently; the chauffeur's fingers were upon the gear handle as I appeared. I took my place by the side of Janet, unrecognizable beneath her motor-veil, and we glided off northwards. There were no signs of any

disturbance as we shot into the broad main street. We gathered speed up the Chapeltown Hill, and very soon we were racing for Scotland.

Janet passed me a silver flask soon after we had passed out of the suburbs. I shook my head.

"You know that I never take anything until one o'clock," I reminded her. "Why should I drink in the middle of the morning?"

I fancied that I caught through her veil a gleam of that almost worshipping fidelity which had led me to trust this woman as I had trusted no other in my life.

"What a nerve!" she murmured.

"I have no nerves," I rejoined; "neither have I any fear. By this time you ought to realize it."

"All went smoothly?" she asked.

"Absolutely according to program. A chance customer would have been the only possible disturbance, and the position of the bank rendered that unlikely."

"What happened?"

"I shot the manager through the shoulder-blade," I told her. "The heart would probably have been safer, but the blinds of the bank were all drawn to keep out the sun, and my Panama was as good as a mask. His clerk was almost dead from fear before I touched him. I didn't have to waste a bullet there."

"And how much?" she inquired.

"Only just over seven thousand pounds," I admitted. "It seems a pitiful amount for so much planning and risk. Still, something had to be done."

We were up on a stretch of moorland now, well away from curious eyes. Janet and I were busy for some ten minutes, making three parcels of my stock of notes. Then she looked at the map.

"Arthington should be the next village," she remarked.

I nodded. We descended a steep hill. Halfway up the next we came upon a small motorcar drawn up by the side of the road, the bonnet thrown open, its owner seated in the dust. The latter rose to his feet as we approached. I handed him the black bag which I had been carrying, in which were my Panama hat and one of the packets of notes. He raised his cap nonchalantly.

"According to plan?" he asked.

"According to plan," I replied.

We sped on for another twenty miles, and then an almost similar occurrence took place. A man seated by the side of his motorcycle rose to his feet as we approached. I handed him the second packet.

"All well?" he asked.

"Perfectly," I assured him.

We were off again in less than ten seconds. Our third stop was at the top of a hill forty miles farther north, after we had partaken of a picnic luncheon in the car. A man was seated motionless in a large touring-car, headed in our direction. He held out his arms as we approached, and glanced at his watch.

"Wonderful!" he murmured. "You are three minutes to the good."

I handed him the third packet. He waved his hand and started up his engine. Soon we left him, a speck behind us. I leaned back and lighted a cigarette.

"I have now," I remarked, "only one anxiety."

"And that?" Janet inquired quickly.

"About the greens at Kinbrae," I confided. "I met a man last year who told me that they were apt to get dried up."

She smiled.

"We had plenty of rain last month," she reminded me. "I thought you were going to speak of our friend."

I shook my head.

"Norman Greyes is in Norway," I told her. "I am not sure." I went on, after a moment's hesitation, "whether I do not sometimes regret it."

"Why?"

I looked out across the heather-clad moor to where rolling masses of yellow gorse seemed to melt into the blue haze. It was a very wonderful day and a very wonderful country into which we were speeding.

"Norman Greyes has made life inconvenient for us for several years," I said. "One of our best men has had to devote the whole of his time to watching him. We have been obliged to stay away from places which I very much wanted to visit. He has that absurd gift—he always had—of being able to connect a particular undertaking with a particular person. For that reason



"There are limits to my candor," I protested "I am your enemy, and

we have had to remain idle until we are practically paupers. When we have paid the expenses of this *coup*, and paid the staff, there will be barely enough left to keep us until Christmas. If we could get rid of Norman Greyes, we could seek wider fields."

"Why not?" she asked indifferently. "He is only a man like the others."

I pretended to be deep in thought. As a matter of fact, I was studying Janet. No creature or servant in this world could render such faithful service as she has rendered me; yet I am one of those persons gifted with instincts. I know that she has a strange mind, a strange, tumultuously passionate nature. I have so far been the man of her life. If it were not I, I sometimes wonder whether it might not be Norman Greyes.

We were to have one tense few minutes before we reached our stopping-place for the night. We had just passed through a small town, and our silent chauffeur was preparing to let out his engine again, when we were confronted by what was, under the circumstances, a very sinister sight. Two men on bicycles, approaching us, dismounted and stood in the middle of the road with outstretched hands. The sun, even in the distance, flashed upon their uniforms. We realized at once that they were policemen. The chauffeur half turned toward me.

"What shall you do?" Janet demanded.

"Do?" I replied. "Why, the natural thing, of course. All this



cap and wiping the perspiration from his forehead. "It's a warm day, this, for the bicycles."

It was my policy not to overdo the matter, and indeed it was not necessary, for the man's eyes glistened as I deposited a couple of half-crowns in his hand.

"I am sorry to have given you this trouble," I said. "We tourists are proverbially thoughtless about our number-plates. I hope you will accept this and have a drink with me."

"We will that, sure, sir," the sergeant promised, saluting first me and then Janet. "Come along, Jock," he added; "we'll pay a little visit to the Widow MacGill on the way back."

So we drove off again northward. My chauffeur was an elderly man, who has faced all that the world may hold of evil with me many a time, but his driving for the first few miles was erratic. Janet, I could see, although outwardly she had recovered herself, was on the point of hysterics. I settled myself down in my corner, adjusted my horn-rimmed spectacles, and drew from the pocket of the car a new half-crown book on the principles of golf, written by a late beginner. So we traveled until we reached the inn where we stayed for the night, and late on the afternoon of the following day we arrived at our destination. There was just a bare white house, a lodge, the gate of which was held open by a great, raw-boned gillie, miles of what seemed to be interminable moorland, and below, the sea. I looked around with satisfaction.

"You're Sandy MacLanc, the caretaker here?" I asked, leaning out of the car.

He made a noise which sounded like: "Oo ay!"

"Which way might the golf links be?" I inquired.

He pointed with a long and hairy forefinger.

"The clubhouse is yonder," he vouchsafed a bit somberly. "A step across the road is the fifteenth tee."

I sighed with content.

"Come up to the house," I ordered. "After tea I shall play a few holes."

Sir Norman Greyes Takes Up the Story

MY friend Rimmington called to see me on the night of my return from Norway. He looked around with an air of dismay at my various traveling paraphernalia.

"So you're really off, then?" he remarked.

"On the contrary, I've just returned," I told him. "It was too late in the season to do any good, and I made a mistake in changing my river. The whole thing was a frost."

Rimmington sighed.

"Well, I'm glad to see you back," he declared, sinking into my easy-chair. "All the same, London in August isn't exactly a paradise!"

"Tell me about Leeds," I suggested. "To judge from the newspapers, you seem to be having a lot of trouble about a very simple case."

Rimmington frowned. He was silent for several moments, and glancing across at him, I noticed that he was pale and apparently out of sorts.

you know it. If it pays you to attempt to murder me, I imagine you will try."

is provided for. —Oliver," I added, leaning forward, "those policemen seem to want to speak to us. Pull up."

We came to a standstill a yard or two away from them. The larger of the two men, who wore the uniform of a sergeant, made a solemn and portentous approach.

"Good afternoon, Sergeant," I said. "I hope that we are not in trouble?"

He looked at me as he might have done at a man whose hands were dripping with the blood of his best friend.

"It's your number-plate, sir," he announced. They telephoned us through from Ripon to stop your car and call your attention to it."

"What is wrong with my number-plate?" I asked.

"Why, you've been driving where they've watered the roads freely," the sergeant pointed out, "and it's muddled it up entirely. There's no one can read a letter of it."

I felt Janet's fingers clutch mine, and they were as cold as ice. It was not a moment which I myself forgot, less for its significance than for its effect upon my companion. The chauffeur, the police-sergeant and I solemnly inspected the number-plate; and the former, with a duster from his tool-chest, carefully rubbed it clean.

"That will be all right now, Sergeant?" I inquired.

"That will be quite all right, sir," he admitted, taking off his

"I think I'm stale, Greyes," he confessed. "The Chief pretty well hinted the same thing, and worse, when I got back last night. I really dropped round to see whether you could help me."

"If I can, I will with pleasure," I promised him. "You know that."

"You read the bare account of the affair, of course," Rimmington went on. "Two fairly credible witnesses deposed to seeing a man in a gray flannel suit, with a Panama hat pushed over his eyes, drive up in a Ford car, leave it outside Bailey's grocery stores, walk down the street and turn into the Boulevard where the bank is situated, exactly at the time that the robbery took place. Three women and two children saw him pass up the street two minutes later, and thirty seconds after that, he crossed the street and entered Bailey's grocery stores. The clerk who served him with some marmalade, tea and bacon saw him climb up into the Ford and drive away. The man was known at the shop as Ralph Roberson. There is no doubt that it was his car."

"Half an hour after the robbery, Roberson was arrested at his house,—he was cleaning the car at the time,—and although he had changed his clothes, the light gray suit which he had recently worn was discovered in his bedroom, and the Panama hat, warm with perspiration, in a cupboard. His excuse for changing his clothes was that he put on older things in which to clean the car, and his account of his morning was that he had driven straight up to Bailey's stores for some groceries, and straight back again. Two witnesses are ready to swear that they saw him get out of the Ford and go toward the bank; the grocer's clerk, who served him, is absolutely certain that he was in the shop within thirty seconds of the Ford's pulling up outside, and that when he left he drove straight away."

"What sort of man is this Roberson?" I asked.

"A man of bad character," was the prompt reply. "He was once a bookmaker, but failed. He has been in prison for obtaining goods by false pretenses, and there are half a dozen summonses for debt out against him at the present moment. The only little money he earns, now a days, seems to be by acting as a bookmaker's tout. He knew the neighborhood well, and has once been heard to remark upon the isolated position of the bank. In every respect he is just the man to have done it, and yet there are all my witnesses swearing to different things. Furthermore, he had scarcely a shilling in his pocket, and he confessed that he was going to try and sell the car that afternoon to raise a little money."

"It seems to me," I admitted, "that you have been a little premature in framing your case against Mr. Ralph Roberson."

"So the magistrates thought," Rimmington rejoined dryly. "We managed to get two remands. This morning he was discharged."

"If the grocer's assistant is telling the truth," I remarked thoughtfully, "Roberson could not possibly have committed the robbery. What sort of young man is the assistant?"

"Highly respectable and very intelligent," Rimmington replied. "It would be quite impossible at any time to shake his evidence."

"So much for Mr. Ralph Roberson," I said. "And now who else is there?"

"That's the difficulty," Rimmington confessed. "One doesn't know where to turn. The only other two people who were about the spot at the same moment, were a man and his wife touring

up to Scotland in a big Dartier car. They stopped to make some purchases at Bailey's, but neither of them alighted."

"Any description of the man?" I asked.

"Yes, the grocer's assistant who went out to take the order remembers him. He describes him as a sporting-looking gentleman wearing a brown alpaca dust-coat and a gray Homburg hat. Such a person could not possibly have left the car and walked down the street without notice."

"Any description of the woman?"

Rimmington shook his head.

"To tell you the truth," he confessed, "I didn't ask for one. There were guns and cartridge-magazines and golf-clubs on the top of the car. The two were apparently motoring up to some place they had hired in Scotland."

On the face of it, there seemed no possible connection between these tourists and a local bank robbery. Yet the thought of them lingered obstinately in my mind. A man and a woman, a bank robbery, and the fact that I was supposed to be safe in Norway! I began to take up the pieces of the puzzle once more, and fit them in according to my own devices.

"You seem to have done everything possible, Rimmington," I said at last, "but I think, as my Norway trip has fallen flat, I shall go up to Scotland for a fortnight. Would you like me to call over at Leeds and see if I can pick up anything?"

"Exactly what I hoped you would suggest," he confessed eagerly. "I have brooded over the affair so long that I can think of nothing but the obvious side. The Chief will give you a letter to the Leeds people. Would you like me to come with you?"

I shook my head.

"Better not," I told him. "Better for me to go as a stranger."

That night I traveled down to Leeds.

There was nothing about the neighborhood which differed materially from Rimmington's description. I paid a visit to the place at exactly the hour the robbery had been committed, walked

from the grocery store to the bank, carefully timing myself, and made some trifling purchases inside the shop. The neighborhood seemed to be thickly built over and populated in patches, but here and there were vacant lots. The land opposite the grocery was marked out for building, but operations as yet had not been begun. Later in the day I tracked Roberson to ground in his favorite public-house. Choosing my opportunity, I addressed him.

"Are you the man whom the police made such idiots of themselves about in this bank robbery?" I asked.

"What the hell's that to do with you?" he answered.

His tone was truculent, but he obviously only needed a little humoring.

"Just this much," I replied. "I am a journalist representing one of the picture papers."

It would be worth a fiver to you if you would let me do a sketch of you."

His manner changed at once.

"You don't want an interview?"

"Not likely," I assured him, commencing a rough sketch in a notebook which I had put into my pocket for that purpose. "I read the case myself. A fool could see that you had nothing to do with it."

He stopped drinking and looked at me curiously.

"If I were the police," I went on, (Continued on page 140)



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Thoroughbreds

By Gerald Beaumont

Illustrated by William Meade Prince

IN the lexicon of the race-track, "speed" and "class" are the fundamental concepts. *Speed* expresses the oldest instinct of the human race, the insatiable longing to conquer distance; *class* goes back still farther, standing for that precious quality which enabled the first pollywog to wiggle out of the Mesozoic slime. Throughout the ages, the formula has remained unchanged: speed plus class marks the thoroughbred.

Measured by either standard, swiftness of foot or grace of breeding, excellence found its supreme expression in Viva Reina, silken-coated, soft-eyed queen of the American turf. No better loved mare ever looked through a bridle than the four-year-old daughter of Old Dominion out of Empress Lou. One glance at the graceful figure stepping into the sunshine from the paddock entrance and leading the way toward the barrier, and everyone understood that here indeed was the quintessence of lineage.

The eternal fitness of things ordained that there should be braided in the mane of Viva Reina the silver and purple of the Van Buren stables, for here was a family as substantial as Manhattan itself. Then too, Billy Van Buren, the actual owner of Viva Reina, was in many respects a remarkable young man.

In his college days the younger Van Buren was guilty of so many escapades that his father, old Drexel Van Buren, was forever taking some distinguished personage aside and whispering apologetically in his ear: "You know, Billy is an unutterable ass, but—" And so forth.

The "unutterable ass" displayed an extraordinary facility for doing everything well that was not worth doing at all. He could mix the best cocktails, tell the best stories and travel faster in a football suit than any other man in the history of Nassau. In his senior year he broke an ankle against a Harvard goal post, and thereafter his obsession for speed took the form of racing-cars and other means of mechanical locomotion.

When the war came, Billy Van Buren chucked everything and went to France. His ankle was still a bit stiff, but it did not prevent him from piloting a car that bore the insignia of the General Staff and was superior to all traffic regulations. Later he entered the air service, and when America joined the fray, was transferred to his own forces, rose to command of a combat squadron, and his name became familiar to the breakfast-tables of his native land.

When he came back, bronzed and beribboned, it was to find his

father a financial colossus but still the same old doting "Governor." Like two boys they talked over their respective exploits and their future plans. Billy Van Buren's thrilling narrative, intended solely for his father's ears, lasted five hours. Drexel Van Buren told *his* story in fifteen minutes.

"The old firm's grown a bit, Billy. I had contracts for ten bottoms at sixty-eight dollars a ton when the war broke out. Cleaned up a million and a half on each contract almost overnight. Sold five ships and put seven and a half millions into the South American end of the business. Caught the market right on sugar—another five millions. Now we've got three millions in Liberties, ten ships worth one hundred and eighty dollars a ton, a warehouse valued at two million, and we're cutting into the British trade from one end of the south coast to the other. Billy, my boy, you've been through hell; now I want you to have your share of fun. Forty millions in assets, and I rolled it up all for you. Help yourself, boy—hit 'em hard and high; the old man loves you!"

So the younger Van Buren set out to realize his boyhood dreams. He placed orders for the fastest 'plane, the swiftest motorboat, the speediest racing car that money and American ingenuity could produce. He imported a string of polo ponies, bought one of the most celebrated racing stables in America, and established an amazing stock-farm in the Berkshires. Sport became his world, and speed his lodestar.

One after another, trophies and records fell before the onslaught of Billy Van Buren, and finally there appeared Viva Reina, slender and aristocratic, to carry the purple and silver in the classics of the turf and to assume her place as the queen of American thoroughbreds.

The mare was purchased from Tod Pennington at a figure that set a new record in racing annals. With her, under a two-year contract, went Sandy McKee, as good a trainer as ever breathed the air of the stables. From the taciturn but sentimental Scotchman young Van Buren absorbed respect and admiration for horseflesh, qualities that were intensified with each triumph of Viva Reina, until the gallant mare represented to her owner almost, but not quite, the most desirable possession in the world.

THE god of romance is a fine stage director. Van Buren met Peggy Sheridan at the Madison Square Horse-show under circumstances that impressed the event forcibly on his mind. He was rather hopeful of a clean sweep in the gaited saddle class, but the moment the spot-light disclosed the final challenger, Van Buren drew a quick breath and acknowledged himself beaten.

None but Peggy Sheridan could have achieved that effect and not made it patently theatrical. On the back of her own entry, the milk-hued King of Araby, the heiress to the Sheridan millions rode into the ring, her short dark curls bobbing over a white shirt, open at the throat, and boyish white breeches carrying out the symphony.

Van Buren did not wait for any verdict from the judges' stand. He rushed to one of the floral booths in the lobby, bought all the roses in sight, and trailed by a dozen pages, made his way back to the ring.

It was one of the pretty features of the night, and he climaxed the presentation by handing up to Peggy Sheridan the little morocco case in which he was accustomed to carry the silver wings that surmounted his flying colors.

"Gage d'honneur," he explained. "I'd be awfully happy if you'd take it. I love thoroughbreds, you know; and Jove—I've never seen a more wonderful pair!"

It was a graceful thing to do, and Peggy Sheridan met it gracefully. She slipped to the ground, dark eyes dancing, and extended her hand impulsively.

"There may be a question about the horse, Mr. Van Buren, but when it comes to sportsmanship, no one will ever take your honors away." She brushed back her curls in a military salute.



And then the flashlight photographers let go, and fortunate newspaper men who had caught the general drift of the conversation made hurried notes to be "fluffed up" later as first-page material.

Those flashlight pictures, captioned in breezy fashion, and syndicated all over the country by enterprising news-services, caused a perceptible buzzing around the tea-tables of society.

The daughter of Senator Sheridan was worth several millions in her own name. People recalled her game-hunting exploits in Africa, her passion for fanciful costumes and extraordinary pets, her athletic prowess, her celebrated million-a-minute Red Cross speech in Wall Street, and her apparent ambition to make everyone else dizzy; so what more natural than that she should marry Billy Van Buren, the American speed-prince?

"And then, they're both of such splendid families," argued Society, "and so temperamentally alike—rather high-steppers."

More and more they were seen in each other's company. While their interests paralleled, a sort of *entente cordiale* developed which eliminated competition. If Peggy Sheridan entered her bull terriers in the Knickerbocker Kennel Show, Van Buren kept his at home and sought top honors in the Airedale class. Between them, they made pretty much of a clean-up in the National Coursing Stakes and the North American Field Trials. Flying in the New York Baltimore Sweepstakes, Van Buren registered the lowest elapsed time; and Peggy Sheridan's yacht defended its honors successfully in the Newport Regatta.

All these activities were viewed complacently by the elect, but when interest was at its height, the pendulum which operates by the law of averages reached the turning-point in the arc of abnormal prosperity and began the downward swing along the path of inevitable reckoning. Far-sighted business men sought financial storm-cellar; small bubbles burst, and then larger ones; foreign trade became demoralized, Wall Street uneasy; and the current of readjustment became a millrace.

Old Drexel Van Buren struggled manfully to keep his head above the flood, but many a younger and stronger man than he found himself facing a receivership.

There was nothing mystifying about the threatened collapse of the Van Buren interests. Expanding its operations, the firm had bought heavily on the market sugar and coffee on consignment, and had sold on bill-of-lading two shiploads of rice. To accomplish this, the elder Van Buren had hypothecated the firm's bonds and borrowed seven and a half million from New York banks.

With the break of the market, Van Buren and Company stood to lose six million in sugar and coffee, and another three million when their rice was declined by the consignee. The value of bottoms dropped almost as speedily as it had risen; and one after another, holders of the firm's securities became alarmed, and creditor banks, under instructions from the Federal Reserve authorities, began calling their loans. Meanwhile, Billy Van Buren

At the attorney's grunt of protest, Van Buren looked up quickly and then laughed in sudden comprehension of the joke.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" he exclaimed. "I forgot that it was in code. The message is from Sandy McKee, my trainer at Saratoga, and it refers to Viva Reina. Here, I'll decipher it: 'Weather clear, track fast, Viva Reina breezed a mile in one minute and thirty-nine seconds and is ready to win for you. Signed: McKee.' That means," he explained, "that Sandy McKee figures the mare will capture the Saratoga Stakes today and thus prove herself ready for the International Derby at Belmont. Of course I'm going to watch her run; so you see I can't very well attend your conference."

Cartwright consulted his watch. "You don't mean that you figure on being in Saratoga this afternoon?" he questioned.

"Of course I do," Van Buren answered. "Come along with me. I'm going to hop off in about an hour. I can cut train time in half, you know, and I'll get you back in New York in plenty of



"There may be a question about the horses, Mr. Van Buren, but when it comes to sportsmanship, no one will ever take your honors away."

pursued his way blissfully along the pathway of the speed-burners. . . .

Duncan Cartwright, family counselor, located Billy one morning at the latter's club. In his hand the lawyer carried a morning paper which published on the financial page a thinly veiled reference to the financial embarrassment of one of the city's oldest and most reliable firms. Van Buren was at breakfast, and he waved Cartwright to a chair beside him.

The attorney accepted the invitation and then opened the paper to the market news. "Read that," he said soberly. "I want you to attend a conference in my office this afternoon. We're on the rocks, you know, and there may be something you can do, though I don't imagine what."

Van Buren grinned cheerfully. "You're frank, aren't you? Of course there isn't anything I can do, and you've picked out a rotten day for a conference; I can't possibly attend. Read that." He tossed over a night telegram, and Cartwright adjusted his glasses gravely. This is what he read:

"Pancake burning. Coffee clear. Rambled thirty-nine. Table set for you. —Head Waiter."

time for dinner; how's that hit you?"

The lawyer's, "No, thank you," was uttered with emphasis.

"How about tomorrow?" he inquired.

"Worse," said Van Buren. "I'm booked to start from scratch in the Long Island Motorboat Handicap, and I wouldn't miss it for the world."

"Humph! Well, let's make it the following day."

The younger man shook his head. "You're forgetting the International Polo Match, and after that there are the auto-races in Florida—"

Cartwright controlled himself with a very great effort.

"My dear young man," he protested, "my very dear young man!

Is it possible that you do not comprehend that your father is facing bankruptcy, that this country is confronting the greatest industrial crisis in fifty years, that—"

Billy Van Buren suddenly interrupted, tossing aside his napkin and leaning confidentially across the table.

"Cartwright," he said, "let's come to an understanding."

"Precisely," agreed the lawyer. "That's what I'm here for."

"Well, then," Van Buren pursued, "here it is: I have at the present time all the money I want, and it's invested in the things that I like. No one can touch my personal fortune, and I figure that it is sufficient to care for Dad and myself in a perfectly befitting manner. Now, if the firm goes to the bow-wows, as you seem to think it will do, I'll be damn' well pleased, for it's the only way I'll ever get the Governor to step out of the harness and live like a gentleman. He will never quit unless he is made to, and I certainly have no intention of trying to perpetuate a business that would compel me to give up the things in life that I consider worth while. Now, you'll excuse me, wont you, if I hurry off to the field?"

Very red in the face, Attorney Duncan Cartwright arose and

bowed to the younger man in a manner dignified and courtly, as became an ex-Senator of the United States.

"I wish you *bon voyage* and success in your chosen field of effort," he said. "Pray do not let me detain you."

An hour later the special Curtiss-Blauvelt, a mile high in the sunlight, was following the trail of the river. Nor was Billy Van Buren alone. His eleventh-hour inspiration had its reward. In front of the pilot's seat was the hooded and jacketed figure of Peggy Sheridan.

They made a perfect landing in the center of the track itself, and later watched Viva Reina romp home in the rich Saratoga Stakes, leading a gallant field by two lengths. Van Buren had wagered one hundred thousand on the mare's chances, at one to four, but he was jubilant for other reasons. . . .

The International Derby was a new event, establishing the supreme classic in the racing annals of the world. It provided one hundred thousand dollars and a gold trophy to the winner and was open only to four-year-olds which, in the preceding season, had captured the three most important events in their respective countries. Viva Reina's impressive victory that day showed that she was ready to uphold American honors in the epochal thoroughbred test now but a few days distant.

Van Buren and his guest took the air again as soon as the fifth race was over and began the homeward flight. It was a perfect day for flying, redolent with the charm of late autumn, and Van Buren's reflections were in harmony with his surroundings. He was young; he was independently wealthy; he had just seen the silver and purple cheered by twenty-five thousand people; Peggy Sheridan was in front of him; and the earth lay below them—a colorful mosaic. He shut off the motor, and they drifted through soundless space with nothing to indicate that they were moving at all.

He leaned forward. "Great, isn't it?"

The girl looked back and nodded dreamily.

Yielding to impulse as usual, Van Buren spoke again:

"Let's team it together, Peggy, always. I'm crazy about you and lonely as the devil. I—"

"Billy Van Buren!" exclaimed Miss Sheridan. "Are you proposing?"

"I'm trying to," he acknowledged cheerfully. "It's my maiden effort, so you'll have to make allowances."

The answer was a laugh of silver.

The daughter of Senator Sheridan contemplated her companion a moment and then directed a calm glance at the earth beneath them.

"I suppose if I say no, you'll go into a tail-spin," she observed. "Do start the engine up, Billy, and give me a chance to think it over."

Immediately the roar of the motor precluded further conversation as the gray plane sped toward Manhattan. The speed at which they made the return trip indicated Van Buren's eagerness to learn his fate. Just as the long day was fading, they circled over the landing-field and then swooped gracefully down, coming to rest as a number of overalled figures hastened to meet them.

Van Buren led the way to his racing car, tucked his companion in, then took his seat at the wheel.

When they were well on their way downtown, Peggy Sheridan of her own accord broke the silence.

"You're a dear boy, Billy, and I'm not at all sure that I don't love you; but there are three perfectly good reasons why I won't marry you."

Van Buren kept his eyes on the stream of traffic ahead. "Do you mind listing the reasons?" he asked.

"Not at all," she responded. "First, everybody would say that you have added another souvenir to your collection, and that's just about it; I'd be of no more use to you than any other trophy of the chase. Second, you hold one-half the prize-winners in the country, and I control the balance. If we married, it would be a combination in restraint of trade, and we'd be rightfully prosecuted. Third,"—she checked the figure off on a slim white finger,—"and this is the serious one, Billy, the man I marry must show something else besides speed."

"Something besides speed?"

"Yes," she affirmed, "speed plus a certain quality that not even Kipling could define. You know how he puts it:

"If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew

To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them 'Hold on!'

"That's the quality I mean, Billy. Speed is just a matter of mere mechanics or muscles, unless it is backed by the other."

"And I haven't got it—the other?" Van Buren put the question quietly.

"I don't know," she responded. "I suppose you have, or you would never have done those wonderful things in France. But the war is over now, and you are the American Speed King,

with no other occupation than collecting cups and ribbons. Of course, I'm doing much the same thing; in fact, we're so near alike that it's silly; but what's forgiven in a woman is sometimes regarded differently in a man. Am I making myself clear, Billy?"

Van Buren grinned ruefully. "You're doing splendidly, my dear," he commented. "You're willing to admit that I'm a speed-burner, but you question my ability to carry weight and go a distance on a heavy track."

"No," she contradicted, "it isn't that at all. I think you have the ability, but the circumstances are such that it is not required of you, and hence, speed is sufficient for your purposes. Outside of a good husband, speed meets all my requirements too; so let's forget it, Billy, and continue to be just good friends."

Van Buren was a game loser. As they turned into Riverside Drive, he stopped the car a moment at a corner florist's, excused himself and returned a moment later with an enormous bouquet of her favorite Irish Fireflame roses.

"Don't count me out of the running yet," he pleaded. "It's rather hard to have my horses and dogs win every event, and then to come a cropper in my own start. You'll suspend judgment, won't you, while I try to find out what's wrong with me?"



The elder Van Buren had the appearance of a man whose body had been broken on the rack.

Peggy Sheridan buried her face in the flowers, and they alone heard her reply. Van Buren was watching the traffic-signal, or he might have detected the effect produced by his last speech and have pressed his advantage. But the golden moment slipped by, and, when he again stole a glance at his companion, she was gazing dreamily into space.

When they parted company at the Sheridan mansion, Van

Buren went home, and later that night in the library of his own residence encountered a second problem. He found his father seated before a log fire, his gaunt form, clad in evening clothes, outlined against the crimson plush of the luxurious armchair. The elder Van Buren had the appearance of a man whose body had been broken on the rack and then flung aside as wreckage. His son's eyes widened in quick concern.

"Why, Governor!" he exclaimed. "Why, Governor—what's happened?"

Drexel Van Buren continued his silent contemplation of the dancing flames. The younger man's thoughts raced back to his conversation that morning with Lawyer Cartwright, and he thought he understood.

He put an affectionate arm around his father's shoulders. "Don't take it too hard, Dad," he urged. "You've done your bit and earned a rest. I've got enough to take care of us both. Let the business go hang, and you and I will have a good time together."

Van Buren Senior patted his son's hand and smiled wistfully. "You're going to take care of me, eh, Billy? You're a fine boy—a splendid chap; but I'm afraid you don't quite understand about things."

"No?"

"No." Then after a moment Drexel Van Buren spoke again: "Of course, we can't all be heroes. You had a golden chance, and you made the most of it. I'm mighty proud of you. With me, it's been heavy going all my life, plodding along through the mud to make a success of the business my father and my father's father created and carried on. It's a good deal like a race, you know. The test comes in the stretch, as you've often pointed out, and I would like to have finished a winner. Once I could have stood the gaff, could have met the challenge; but I'm no longer young, Billy; they're too strong for me. But it goes against the grain to quit when the wire is in sight; that's what *hurts*."

"Just how bad is it, Governor?" Van Buren Junior inquired quietly.

"We need about seven million in cash to see us through. Dalrymple went over to the Pan-Atlantic people Tuesday, and that precipitated matters. As general manager the banks believed

he would have been able to pull us out of the hole. They think I'm too old to weather the storm, and I guess they're right."

Billy Van Buren paced up and down the long room.

The elder man roused himself and strove to square his shoulders. "I don't want you to make any sacrifice, Billy—you're young, and you're blooded; you're a good, clean sportsman and that's a royal profession. They've given me ten days in which to fight off a receivership. Perhaps something will turn up in the meantime; if not—I'll become the father of America's speed king; that ought to be honor enough for an old man, eh, Billy? Let's go to bed, son."

The only thing that developed in the tangled affairs of the Van Buren family during the next few days was the International Derby, set for Belmont Park on the day before Drexel Van Buren was required to face his creditors in the final show-down.

The approach of this extraordinary event threw into partial eclipse the nation's political and industrial problems, enabled sporting writers to break into the front pages of even the most conservative dailies, and developed such a storm of controversy and conjecture that Billy Van Buren had time to think of nothing else.

Admitting that Viva Reina was undoubtedly the queen of the American turf, ninety out of every hundred horsemen bewailed the fact that a mare should be com-



Attorney Duncan Cartwright bowed. "I wish you success in your chosen field of effort," he said.

pelled to defend the national colors against five supreme contestants of the opposite sex.

As every turf-expert knows, endurance and stamina in the last analysis are the prerogatives of the male. The daughter of Old Dominion had already shattered one tradition, which held that a mare could never win a Derby; but when it came to asking her to defeat the combined attack of Brighthurst, the English super-horse; St. Egwin, the Canadian crack; the French stallion Beau Monde; Don Pedro, out of the royal stables at Madrid; and the Argentine entry Rio Norte—even the most sanguine followers of the silver and purple appreciated that the test was

unparalleled in race-track history. Following their three-year-old season, every entrant had been shipped to America to become acclimated, and though they had never been called upon to face one another, each had won sufficiently important events to indicate that in speed and performance they were well matched. Meeting now as four-year-olds, and for the first time, they were fully entitled to the extraordinary attention they received.

Billy Van Buren sought comfort from Sandy McKee.

"Oh, aye," said the grizzled Scot, "it will be a terrible struggle, but the Queen will do what we ask of her. The only question is, should we ask it?"

"We have to," answered Van Buren. "She's the only one qualified to start in the American colors."

"Well, then," said McKee simply, "she'll win." And it was with this understanding that when the great day came, Viva Reina—one hundred and twenty-one pounds on her back, her mane plaited with silver and purple, and trembling in every bronze-gold limb—was sent to the barrier for the utmost test of the thoroughbred.

(Continued on page 134)

The Story So Far:

REMEMBER STEDDON—whose clergyman father had named her after one of the Puritan maidens of the *Mayflower*—found herself in desperate difficulties. She had given her heart to Elwood Farnaby, with whom she sang of Sundays in the choir of her father's small-town church; and because Elwood's drunken father left him the sole support of his mother and the younger children, young Farnaby could not marry her. But for some time now, Remember had known there was urgent reason for the marriage.

Remember's anxiety aggravated the cough which of late had worried her parents, so that at length they prevailed upon her to consult Doctor Bretherick concerning it; and the wise old physician soon discovered the true source of her trouble—and persuaded Remember to accept the obvious solution: in spite of the many material difficulties, and even though Elwood had lost his job, Remember must marry him at once. Bretherick had arranged the whole matter when—Farnaby was brought in dying, after an automobile accident.

Bretherick now ordered the broken-hearted girl West because of that cough, and told her how she was to write her parents successive letters telling of her meeting with an old acquaintance, of her falling in love with him, marrying him—and being left soon a widow. Remember agreed to this. But she confided in her mother; and that much-tried good woman became her fellow-conspirator.

So Remember Steddon set out for Arizona; on the train she encountered several motion-picture actors, and the acquaintances she made with vulgar little Viva d'Artoise and with the handsome young star Tom Holby were to mean much to her.

First from Tucson and then from Yuma she wrote her parents letters, according to Bretherick's scheme, telling of her acquaintance with and marriage to a fictitious Mr. Woodville. Later she wrote that she was going with her husband on a prospecting trip into the desert; then she journeyed to Palm Springs, seeking employment as chambermaid at a hotel there. But at Palm Springs she encountered Tom Holby and his moving-picture company, out "on location," and Tom found temporary employment for her as an "extra woman." She repulsed his merely friendly advances, however, and when the company went away, he left her to her own devices.

Remember found employment as a domestic on a ranch near by. Wandering up a steep path one day, she fell over a cliff and was badly hurt. She recovered—and was told by the physician that her expectations of motherhood would not be realized.

And now her acquaintance with the moving-picture folk led her to Los Angeles, where a group of girls variously employed in the moving-picture industry gave her hospitality. She obtained a position in a cinema laboratory, but later lost it. Frantic with a desire for success on the screen, she besought a chance of Mr. Tirrey, a well-known director; and when he refused her, offered what she had been told was a necessary bribe. Tirrey declined to accept the "bribe" and explained to her how mistaken her idea was. . . . Shortly thereafter Remember received a telegram from her mother, who, anxious about her daughter, was on the way to California.



Rupert
Hughes'
greatest novel

SOULS

Illustrated by

SIXTY-FIVE thousand girls ran away from American homes in 1920, and probably many more in 1921. This caused a vast pothor, though girls have been running away from home since girls and homes were.

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FOR SALE

Howard Chandler Christy

They followed the cave-men, the barbarian invaders, the troops from home, the caravans, the argosies. They filled the primeval factories and the places of merriment, the Corinthians and Alexandrias. Some of them became slaves and some sultanas, priestesses,

needful and terrified in the next room, or beyond the deserts or the seven seas. The mother's one business was to get to her. She sent a telegram and took the first train she could. The telegram was her old night-cry: "I'm coming, honey. Don't worry;

royal favorites, empresses, czarinas, queens of song and art. Some starved, some flourished.

Remember Steddon was not exactly a runaway. She was a walkaway. She disguised her motive of escape and expected to return. But too many unexpecteds occurred and she felt that to go back would condemn her to ignominy and futility, while to stay away promised a chance for wealth and glory. She heard voices calling her, saw spirits summoning her to the skies, no less than Joan of Arc did, and perhaps with no more insanity.

Casting off family ties had released her completely, had made her her own. But now her mother had found her out and was pursuing her. Her heart would not let her flee farther, but her mother would be as grave a problem to her as she to her mother.

The letter she had written her mother had been the instinctive cry of a child beset in the dark by some enormous presence passing by bloodcurdlingly. Just as instinctive was the compulsion that drew her mother to her across the continent.

When the poor worried soul understood that Remember in far-off California had lost the child that was to have been both her burden and her solace, Mrs. Steddon's heart leaped with primeval impulses. Remember was still her baby in the dark, and it did not matter whether she lay

Mamma's coming to her baby." She shot this cry across the continent and called Remember "baby," although Remember felt as old as night.

The Reverend Doctor Steddon had wished that he might go along, but his church tasks held him, and he could not find the money for two fares. The lies he had been told had succeeded to perfection. He believed that Remember had really met a real Mr. Woodville and married him only to be widowed of him by a gruesome desert-calamity. Never having questioned these premises, he did not question the tragedy of her loss of the posthumous child of the supposititious father. Remember's efforts to hide herself and support herself in the wilderness he assumed to be her usual unselfish and characteristic unwillingness to be a bother to her father and mother.

Doctor Steddon agreed with his wife that she must set out at once for Palm Springs. He raised the necessary funds by lifting still more of his little savings from the bank, and drawing pauperdom a little closer than before. But his only regret was that he had not more to sacrifice.

And now Mrs. Steddon was following Remember's train-route, with all the difference in the world: Remember, a young and beautiful girl, had had all her fate before her, and a heart of growing audacity and reckless ambition; Mrs. Steddon, an old and shabby parsoness, had all her hope behind her and that not much, and a heart full of inexperience and of timidity before everything except self-immolation.

When Remember learned that her mother was already on the train, she could devise no plan for turning her back. Somehow she had to be met and provided for. Money problems have a way of getting slowly worse and worse until the one comfort is that they cannot get worse; then something happens, and a crater opens.

Every one of the women of Remember's Hollywood household was out of work. She who had savings was lending them to her who had not. Remember could not pay for new clothes or for the old ones, not even an installment on the debts she had added to Leva's debts.

And now her mother! "In every deep a lower deep!" But Leva responded to her panic by an almost hysterical bravery. She laughed, "I'll dig a little farther down in the sock," and added the trite old bravery: "Cheer up, the worst is yet to come!"

With a few dollars from Leva's waning resources, Remember took the train to Palm Springs, her one remaining hope being the confidence that when she returned, she would find a letter from Mr. Tirrey saying that she was engaged.

She reached Palm Springs in time to have a little talk with Mrs. Dack, who was closing out her business and good will as a washerwoman and preparing to take her boy Terry to the golden city of Los Angeles. This was a gamble, indeed, and Remember was frightened by what she had set on foot. There is nothing so terrifying as having one's advice accepted. She had not realized what an army of children was already quartered in Los Angeles.

By working all the time and never spending much, Mrs. Dack had accumulated a pittance that looked like a fortune to her. She would find that Los Angeles prices were not scaled to keep retired laundresses in luxury for an extended period.

MRS. DACK and her boy and Remember stood on the platform waiting for the train; and when Mrs. Steddon stepped off, Remember put her right back on again. She ran forward and persuaded the baggageman to carry Mrs. Steddon's trunk on to Los Angeles. It was only when the train was flying once more through the desert that she and her mother found a chance for real greetings—and then they were restrained by the presence of other passengers.

At least, Mrs. Steddon was restrained. Remember was stimulated. Mrs. Steddon was no less aglow with joy in the recovery of her lost lamb, and no less aware of the audience, but she felt quelled by it, and under an obligation not to disturb it by her personal emotions.

At home she lived in a dull old house, as devoid of architectural fripperies as of graces. The blinds were always down, and the ideal of that house was that the neighbors and passers-by should never know of its existence. Good houses were seen and not heard.

She was troubled by Remember's voluble enthusiasm, her warm clothes, her careless rapture, her demonstrative affections. She did not mar the festival by rebuking her child, but she grew a little more quiet and reserved, as if to give a hint, or at least to lower the average.

Mrs. Steddon's body had traveled thousands of miles, but her soul had not budged. She was just what Remember had left in the village, looking indeed a bit more village in her bonneted shabbiness than before. But to the mother, Remember was altered almost beyond recognition.

The Remember who left the village had been a spirit-broken, unschooled, colorless thing from a small-town parsonage. Limited as her experience had since been, it had been revolutionary. Remember herself could not have imagined how changed she was. She was so changed outside and in, from coiffure to footgear, that at first her own mother did not recognize her in the, to her, gaudy young actress who swept down upon her, flung her back on the train and treated her as a fresh-air-fund waif. Later she realized with embarrassed admiration that this brilliant butterfly was what had come out of the dun chrysalis that she had called Remember. She had loved the child, but had never suspected her of being so capable of so many metamorphoses.

The swift journey from the mountains and through the desert into the orange gardens was repeated for her in the journey she made now with Remember's soul. The girl's first questions were eager demands for news from home; but then her talk turned all to herself. She was "selling" herself to her mother, as she had tried to sell herself to the casting director.

Mrs. Steddon had been prepared to find a scared and sickly child in a shack in Palm Springs. She had come as a rescuing angel. She found that her wings and halo were old-fashioned, and her child doing better without her than ever she had done at home. As Remember's tongue outraced the train, the dazed mother learned that her baby was now a fearless adventurer upon the paths of ambition, that she was actually one of those appalling creatures known as actresses, and a movie actress, above all things! A movie actress, below all things!

REMEMBER'S own development had been so gradual that she did not realize how dazzling it must be to her mother. It was condensing the history of the world into a brief synopsis. She had begun as a contrite Eve turned out into the wilderness; suddenly she was Hagar, but again she was Cleopatra, Joan of Arc, then Sarah Bernhardt—and all in a paragraph.

Mrs. Steddon's comments were simple gasps and a reiterated "Well, well!" Remember's autobiography was hardly finished by the time Los Angeles was reached.

And now the abashed immigrant that Remember had been when she faced the crowded streets and the taxi-comets was as sophisticated as if she had been a native daughter of Los Angeles. She sheltered her mother as if her mother were a newcomer immigrant of immature mind.

They left Mrs. Dack and Terry at the home of a cousin, then sped on to the bungalow. A fiery chariot was what the taxicab was to Mrs. Steddon. Excitement was like an anesthetic, or she would have flown to pieces.

Leva, who ran out to embrace her and whisk her into the shrimp-pink residence, found her calm and serene. But it was the calm of chloroform.

She made no resistance to Leva's disposition of her and her things. She accepted the one vacant room and made no demur at the decorations left by its late occupant—snapshots of rollicking beach-parties, of horseback rides through cañons, of Greek dancers, of postal cards with queer photographs and queer jokes, portraits of stars and others all in a high state of excitement.

During the train-ride and Remember's chatter, Mrs. Steddon had been doing some earnest thinking in a little private brain-room just back of the auditorium. Her husband had pledged her to write him frankly how their poor child was and how soon she would be strong enough to be brought back home.

She never hesitated about whether or not she should tell her husband the appalling truth. Her only hesitance concerned just what untruth it was safest and most satisfactory to tell him. She was a wicked old woman, and it was small wonder that she rapidly lapsed into enormous popularity among the lost souls of Hollywood.

Fortunately her daughter left her alone for a while, and she had time in her gaudy bedroom to work out an attractive lie. She must say that Remember was well. That was a good solid fact to rest the springboard of fancy on. She must explain that Remember had left Palm Springs for Los Angeles. Why? Well, because she had a chance to improve her position—and her doctor had said that Palm Springs was too full of palms or something. The doctor's advice was the best bet, because the doctor was the only human power that her husband recognized as superior to his own impulses.



"Oh, that is too bad!" Bermond groaned, and his voice took on a mothering tone. He felt that Remember was somehow an artistic weeper. His brain was alert to make use of ability wherever he found it.

Next, what was Remember doing in Los Angeles to support herself? She had written that she needed no more money from home. It would be fatal to say that she had entered upon a cinematic career. And it would be adding humiliation to infamy to admit that she had lost her job even in that inferno.

For the moment, Mrs. Steddon was inspired to write to her trusting husband that she found Remember in very good health and engaged in nice, light, ladylike work in the Public Library at pretty good pay, considering the cost of living; also that she was living with some right nice ladies—also in library work—at the address given. She closed with some remarks on the beauties of California, a land the Lord had been awfully partial to.

As she finished this letter, Mrs. Steddon felt dizzy. She wondered if her giddiness might be the first symptoms of whatever it was that carried off Sapphira and her husband. It was really a kind of land-sickness, following the long railroad flight, and a general fatigue under the hailstorm of strange facts that had beaten upon her.

But remembering that Sapphira had fallen down, she decided to lie down first. She fell asleep, and did not know that Leva Lemaire, peering in and seeing her there stretched out, white-haired and benign, had looked upon her as a tired saint, and tiptoeing in had spread over her a Navajo blanket of barbaric red and black.

While her mother slept, Remember wept—more freely and copiously than in all her life before.

CHAPTER XXX

AS soon as Remember had seen her mother bestowed in her room, she begged to be excused for a while, as she had urgent business to look after.

No word had come from the studio as to the result of her test pictures. There was no telephone in the bungalow to bring a verbal message in or take one out—Los Angeles having grown so fast that the telephone company made no pretense of keeping pace. Remember could have gone to a drugstore and telephoned from a pay station, but she was afraid to hear her fate come rattling out of the little rubber oracle. She wanted to meet her destiny face to face, and make a battle for it if the issue hung in doubt.

She simply had to have work now, because she had her mother as well as herself to support. She was still too new to realize that need is not a recommendation or a substitute for ability. In so far as it has any bearing in the case, being hard-up is an argument for disability. Jobs are offered most promptly to those who already have them; rarely do they seek those who are idle.



"You've—well, just for instance, you've been—er—betrayed, and your child has died and you've been accused of murdering it."

As Remember hastened along a palm-lined avenue to her street-car, she was hailed by the man from whose arms she had fought herself free in rage and terror the first evening of her arrival in Hollywood when he tried to make her dance—Mr. Creighton. Another evidence of the distance she had traveled was the fact that she had danced with him often since, and that when he invited her to step into his automobile, she hailed him as a rescuing angel and ordered him to rush her to her studio at top speed.

He had bought himself a new racer, a long underslung craft of desperate mien. "I can't afford a car," he confessed, "and it's all bluff, but it makes a great effect when you're hunting a job to roll up in your own roadster."

The impudence was contagious, and Remember remarked:

"I must get me a car. What do you think is the best make?" The two non-capitalists blithely juggled thousands of dollars and hundreds of horsepower.

"What effect do you want to affect?" said Creighton. "If you're going to play ingénues, you'll want something shy and virginal; if you're going in for adventuresses and heavies, you'd better get a bus that's a bit sporty."

Remember thought she was nobly conservative when she said:

"I shouldn't like to be too sporty or conspicuous."

"That's right; the gaudy old days are over," said Creighton. "The pioneers out here went in for plaids and gold brocade upholstery and everything outrageous. Then Jeanie MacPherson made a sensation by having her car painted plain black, and others followed."

Remember was good enough actress to conceal from Creighton the fact that her interest in the makes of cars was a mere wind-shield to the cold gale of anxiety playing on her nerves. She was in a panic lest she should not be engaged at all. Her immediate problem was not the selection of an automobile but the assurance of food and raiment.

Creighton rolled her up to the studio gates and waved her good luck. She faltered when she entered the casting office, and she almost fainted when Tirrey's assistant told her bluntly that there was "nothing doing." Mr. Tirrey had so many hearts to break, so many hopes to sicken with deferment, that he avoided the ghoulsh task when he could. He had warned his assistant to save him from undergoing another of Remember's assaults upon his emotions.

Scattered among the laity, they would have passed for ordinary folk, but grouped here they took on a curiously professional mummer air.

Remember stared at them, and a hot resentment thrilled her. She would not accept a place in this mob of nonentities. She went back to the window and motioned to the assistant casting-out director. She pleaded for just a moment of Mr. Tirrey's time. The assistant said he was busy, but he could not snub those eloquent eyes. And that patient man, Mr. Tirrey, with a Samaritanism that should win him through Purgatory, accepted the ordeal, invited her in and braced himself for the familiar business of the undertaker, the old sexton in the graveyard of art.

Remember began: "I don't think you realize how much this



When Remember received his curt facer through the little window in the door between the waiting-room and the outer office, she blenched and fell back. The room was full of anxious souls, each with its desperation. There sat a hungry fat woman whose bulk had kept her employed when sylphs had had to wait. Next her was a gaunt creature who could play *Famine* or a comic spinster with equal skill. A brace of sparrows with yellowed curls, that looked like handfuls of pine-shavings, waited with their mother. Three beautiful young men with the eyes of dying deer regarded their finger-nails for lack of more exciting literature. An assortment of villains, first and second murderers, and more or less aristocratic extra folk stood about hoping against experience.

means to me, Mr. Tirrey. My mother has unexpectedly arrived. I've just got to support us both now, and it is more important than ever that I find work."

Poor Mr. Tirrey had heard this so often that it ought to have bored him. But he could never quite protect himself from these expressive passionate individuals who refused to become mere generalities. He stooped to self-defense.

"You don't seem to get my angle of it, Miss Steddon. I can only hand out what jobs there are, to the people that fit them best. You came in the other day and said you were so ambitious and determined that you would—er—sell your honor for an opportunity. I told you why I couldn't make the exchange. Now you come in and try to sell me your (Continued on page 147)

Through Eternity

By
Jack Boyle

Illustrated by
G. Patrick
Nelson

FIVE thousand and one years ago, when the race of men was young and the world less old, a solitary traveler paused at nightfall on the barren and untracked waste of the North China steppes. His only provision was a packet of tea, and hunger gnawed cruelly within him. As he squatted, shivering under the numbing touch of the north wind which, as all men know, is the breath of the Evil Ones of the Hurku Hills, a second weary pilgrim approached and joined him. In his pouch he carried rice, but neither tea, meat nor fire. As the two debated their predicament, thankful for the solace of companionship even in their misfortune, a third wayfarer drew near and greeted them with the courtesy of a man of learning. He carried goat's flesh, but neither fire nor water with which to cook. And then as the three lamented this evil fortune, they beheld a fourth traveler. His food-pouch was empty but over his shoulder hung a gourd of water and an earthen brazier of fired charcoal. So, joyously and with proper thanks to the gods, the four supped upon their combined resources and slept side by side in security and contentment.

When the sun's first shafts fell upon their faces, they awoke refreshed and arose, each to pursue his own journey.

"Thy name, my beloved brother, and whither goest thou?" inquired the first traveler of him who had carried rice.

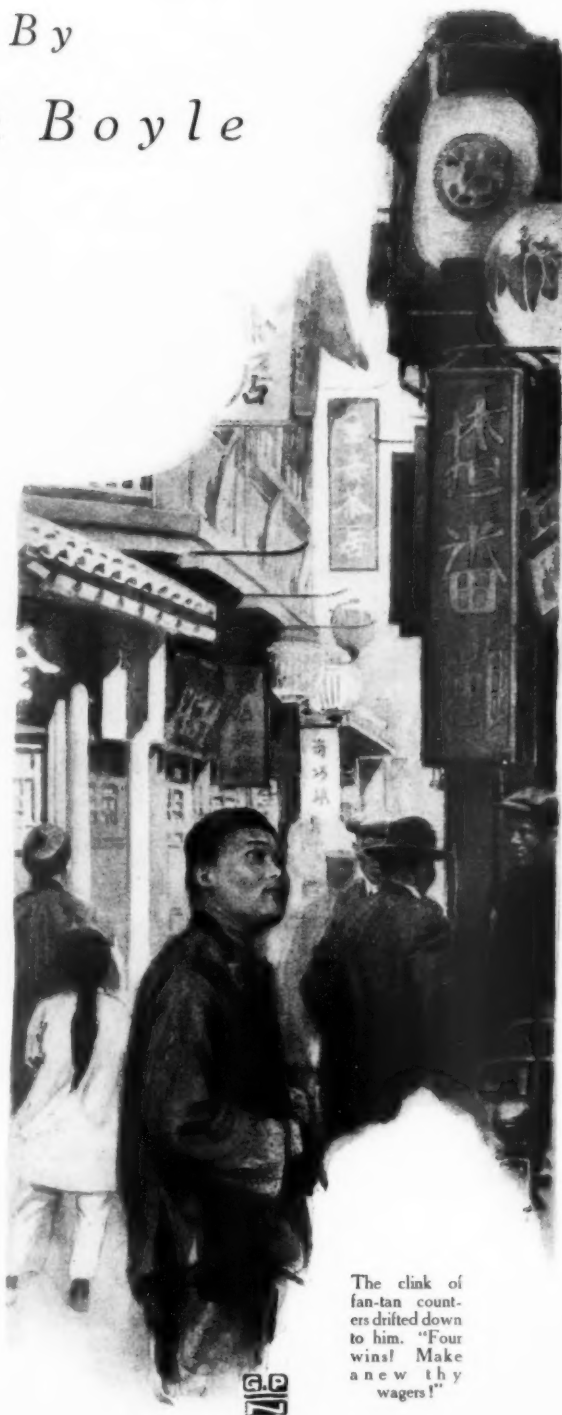
"Lee; and I journey even far to the north."

"And thou?"—of the provider of the goat's flesh.

"Sing; and my path lies to the east."

"And thou also?"—of him who had brought fire and water.

"Ning, who goes toward the setting sun."



The clink of fan-tan counters drifted down to him. "Four wins! Make anew thy wagers!"

"And I am Wong, whose way leads southward," explained the questioner. "From the four far corners of the earth we were united for the space of a single darkness, each to supply the other's need. Again we part, north, south, east and west, but never while memory lives shall we or our sons or our sons' sons, to the end of time, forget this night of our brotherhood."

The four embraced, and straightway swore a solemn oath of eternal fealty, binding upon themselves and their descendants forever—an oath that has been kept inviolate by countless men of the Wong, the Sing, the Lee and the Ning families, throughout fifty long centuries.

Thus, as the tale is told, there came into being in the ancient days the Four Brothers, today accounted the mightiest of *tongs*, into which fortunate men are born by the grace of beneficent gods. And though five thousand and one years have passed, the men whose forefathers embraced and pledged brotherhood forever on the bleak wastes of North China remain, wherever they may meet, brothers unto eternity. . . .

Wong You was a salmon fisherman, with the physique of an athlete, the impractically artistic soul of a beauty-loving dreamer, and at times the win-or-die spirit of a born gambler,



"Two!" cried Wong You. "The wager is mine!" "Three!" shouted Bock Eye. "Look thou."

with full faith in the magic potency of his gods. Five months in the year he slaved at his nets at an Alaskan fishery, hip-deep, eighteen hours of the twenty-four, in waters iced by polar seas. The other seven months he dallied away in placid contentment in the San Francisco *tong*-house of the Four Brothers. When his season's pay was gone, as it usually was within a few days of his return, his *tong* supplied him with food, lodging and a modicum of spending-money, all punctiliously returned from the following fishing season's earnings. But whether his pockets were heavy with gold or empty was one to Wong You, for his life was enriched by something better than any man may buy with money.

As he idly wandered the streets, he detected a vibrant minor chord of exquisite melody beneath the high-pitched chatter of his countrymen; the pungent, aromatic odors of the incense-shops became alchemistic magic which wafted his mind across far seas to new lands of strange beauty and joyous adventure; and when he wandered along the docks during the sun's sleep, as he often did, he clearly beheld the stars in the night sky gather themselves into the forms of beneficent comrades who bade him dream on happily, without fear for today or thought for the morrow.

In his sleep these dreams became achieved reality, and he begrudged the summons to wakefulness that came with a returning sun.

And then, perchance in the very midst of his fancy-flights, the chance sound of a *pi gow* domino or the droning call of a fan-tan dealer suddenly and irresistibly inflamed him with gaming passion. Instantly all else was forgotten. If his pockets were empty, he borrowed, and hung over the gambling table in utter absorption of mind until he had been stripped of every coin and pawnable asset, or (infrequently this) rose with a rich winning. If he won, the fierce desire persisted for days or weeks, and only when an empty money pouch and exhausted credit prevented the possibility of continuing did the placidity of mind that was the increment of his dreams return to him.

The *Grampus*, first of the returning fishing-fleet, brought Wong You back from Alaska, and as the sun-browned hills of California rose slowly against the horizon, his eyes reflected the joy in his heart. Long months of bitter cold and cruelly arduous labor were behind him; ahead were many other months during which he might freely surfeit upon the pleasures he craved. His catch

had been a record one, and the pouch of gold due him at the paymaster's office on the dock would be comfortingly heavy.

The ship docked; Wong You received the fruit of his season's toil; and with hundreds like and yet unlike himself, he hurried toward Chinatown and his *tong*-house. He was fourth in line at the paymaster's office, and noted the numeral subconsciously. On the crowded car which took the chattering band across town, he was the fourth to pay his fare, and again the number registered without conscious thought.

Wong You left the car, climbed the Clay Street hill and turned into Bartlett Alley toward the *tong*-house. From an upper window, barred and curtained, the clink of fan-tan counters drifted down to him—that and the dealer's intoned cry:

"Four wins! Make anew thy wagers, and may the gods of good fortune smile upon thy choice."

"Again four haunts me," Wong ejaculated, suddenly remembering the persistent recurrence of the number in his afternoon's affairs. Instantly he felt the quivering inward thrill that was the premonitory sign of his gaming moods. "Assuredly four is this day's good omen sent me from Heaven. Beyond doubt the gods invite me to drink from the cup of fortune," he argued.

Instantly forgotten was his resolution to enjoy long months of moneyed leisure. The passion to achieve great gain at the price of great risk surged upon him overwhelmingly. Fingers suddenly grown hot with fever fondled the bulky gold pouch within his sleeve.

"It is the will of the gods. So be it," he murmured, and hurried on to his *tong*-house, for no man may neglect a debt to his *tong* even for the space of a single hour.

The gray-beard behind the counter reckoned his account with grave precision and emptied a flood of coins from the sack Wong You flung before him.

"Thy debt, now well paid, is accounted four hundred and forty-four dollars in the gold cash of the white men," announced the old man, and deducting the sum, he handed back the still half-filled pouch.

"Thrice four! Again the good omen of the gods is thrust upon me," cried Wong, and he rushed forth to the near-by gambling-house of Bock Eye with the fierce impatience of one seeking the waiting arms of his best beloved.

Fan-tan is the simplest of gambling games. Imagine a white square in the center of a teakwood table. The four sides of the square are numbered one, two, three and four. The house dealer scoops up a bowl of Chinese copper coins, haphazard, from a box containing hundreds, and empties them upon the white square, with the overturned bowl hiding them from the view of the players. Each then wagers whatever amount he chooses against the house, placing his money on any one of the four numbered spaces that surround the central square. All bets having been made, the dealer raises the bowl and with a tiny steel rake pulls the coins four at a time from the pile in the center of the table. At the end, obviously, there must be left one odd coin, two odd coins, three odd coins or an even four. Those who have laid their money on the right number are paid three to one; others lose.

It was to such a table in the house of Bock Eye, the wily one of great wealth and guile, that Wong You hurried. He was still dressed in his fisherman's clothes, unkempt and reeking with the odors of the *Grampus*' fetid hold, but none, least of all Bock Eye of the avaricious heart, cared for that. Wong's eyes were aflame with the devouring gaming fever within him as he stood beside the table, money-pouch in hand, waiting for the deal to be done and a new one begun.

"One, beloved number of the Majestic Sun, appears," called the dealer, scooping up a fresh bowl of coin counters as he swept the losers' bets into his drawer and paid the winners. "Lay thy wagers, and may the spirits of thy forefathers guide thee."

Wong You tossed his sack of gold upon the fourth number. The dealer glanced up at him and hefted the sack appraisingly.

"All?" he questioned.



At the sound of Wong's step she uncovered her face.

"Aye," answered Wong You. In a single wager he was risking all that remained to him of five months' heart-breaking toil.

And then, with the fatal or fortunate issue left in full confidence upon the laps of the gods, Wong You turned away from the table with complete unconcern and demanded tea of the servant who refreshed Bock Eye's patrons in a farther room.

"Thrice four—such is the prophecy of Heaven," the fisherman murmured. "Three times shall my gold remain as it lies. Thus shall riches be showered upon me, and in return I swear the sacred temple of Ai-Lo-Hun shall be rewarded with gold pieces fourscore."

Four by four the dealer drew out from the center of the table the coins the bowl had covered. An even four remained at the end. Wong You's gods, so far, had not failed him. Without troubling to count the contents of the tied pouch, the banker scribbled a tissue slip cashable for triple the sack's value, laid it beside the pouch and began a new deal. Again four won.



In her tear-misted eyes was the thankfulness of a child reprieved from the brutality of a father's heavy hand.

Wong You now possessed sixteen times his original capital. An excited buzz of comment ran round the table, for all knew his first wager was no small sum. From behind the dealer's chair Bock Eye looked on and smiled, but the beady avarice in his slanted eyes deepened troublously.

Another deal; another victorious four! The triple turn promised by the gods was achieved!

Wong You, now with sixty-four times his capital won within five minutes, was a wealthy man who might return to his homeland and live out a full lifetime of luxury and leisure. And still he lingered over his bowl of tea, carelessly unconscious of the great stake already won.

The dealer looked up at Bock Eye as he wrote the paper slip that must be cashed for many thousands. Bock Eye, the one of guile, nodded, and then unobtrusively but quickly slipped away from the table and halted Wong You in the inner doorway with a greeting of courtesy as he returned toward the gambling-table.

During the half-minute they spoke together, the fourth deal was begun. For the fourth time the fisherman was tempting fate, now for a sum so great that every voice in the room was stilled, every eye fastened in awed excitement upon the slowly diminishing pile of copper counters which spelled riches beyond conception or seven months' penury.

It was then that Wong You reached the table and saw that before his return the gods' promise had been fulfilled in a thrice victorious four. No hint of tension or trepidation was in his smile as he watched the fourth deal.

"From Heaven was given me the gift of wealth, and to Heaven and thee,"—smiling into the face of Bock Eye,—"I have returned it. Four cannot again return to profit me, for my gods grow weary. So be it. I came not in time."

A sigh of regret passed round the table as keen-counting eyes deciphered in advance the remaining number of coins. There would be three. Wong You was penniless.

The dealer emptied the pouch into his drawer, and as the fisherman, with a laugh at his misfortune, turned toward the street door, scooped up a fresh bowl of counters. The game went on. Bock Eye opened a cabinet and smiled with crafty triumph as he drank a tiny

bowl of rice liquor. The half-minute he delayed Wong in the doorway had saved him a fortune.

Nothing of rancor nor of concern for the morrow, and very little of regret was in Wong You's heart, as he sauntered penniless toward the *tong*-house. The distance was a block, but of it he made a journey in which he squandered mentally with untainted delight the riches he had cast away for a bowl of tea. He paused before the windows of Ming the clothier, and chose with an expert eye a half-dozen suits of gorgeously rich apparel. Having chosen, he visioned himself in them and was as content as though in reality they were his. Before the window of Sung, fashioner of gold and jewels, he halted again, and after long study selected an exquisitely carved bracelet of jade. He thrilled as his eyes rested upon it and praised aloud its beauty as if it were a living thing that understood his words.

"Thou shalt richly adorn the arm of her who is to hold me in the embrace of true love," he whispered softly to the jewel

which glowed at him even more softly. Then with momentary memory of who and what he was: "Fool, there is no one so to hold thee," he added to himself with a sigh of self-disdain.

At this moment a pleading girlish voice drifted up to Wong You from the basement adjoining the jeweler's—a basement in which Kong, mender of shoes, earned a daily pittance. The fisherman bent lower and listened.

"Never! Never! O Father, ask not that of me. In the matter of marriage willingly will I obey thee. But serfdom! O Father, I cannot! In this land, justly ruled by the white God, it is shame unnamable."

"Silence, thou thrice worthless one," threatened the angry voice of the old shoe-mender. "Silence, else will my righteous hand heavily stifle thy godless speech. I am thy father and command. Thou shalt obey. Thou callest a girl's serfdom disgrace? Ai-ah, such is my just punishment for permitting thee ever to enter the thrice-accursed mission house of the white women. Bock Eye of the near-by fan-tan house hath looked upon thy face and desires thee as a slave. Fifty pieces of gold hath he offered for thee and my need is great. Too little, in truth, is his price, but if more may not be had thou shalt be sold even this night. I, thy father, have spoken."

"Ai-ah, ai-ah, death's arms to me are more welcome than Bock Eye's," moaned the girl brokenly. There followed the sound of a blow and the girl's scream.

AN ordinary Chinese would have passed on about his own affairs, but Wong You was kin to all those of every race who dream dreams. Without in the least knowing what he purposed, he descended the stairs and threw open the door of the mender of shoes.

On the floor a girl knelt with arms covering her face. Over her, with rattan cane upraised, stood Kong. At the sound of Wong's step she uncovered her face, and the fisherman saw the red welt that defiled the soft ivory tint of her cheek. So small and slender and dainty was she that a white child of seven easily might outweigh her, but beneath the clinging folds of her garments the rounded curves of womanhood in miniature swelled modestly. But in her tear-misted eyes as she looked up at Wong was the dumb thankfulness of a child reprieved for a moment from the brutality of a father's heavy hand. Half woman, half child—such was the little daughter of Kong whom Bock Eye of unlimited wealth coveted.

Wong You stared in silence. Then, as the loose sleeve of her blouse revealed a wrist and forearm so tiny and soft that it seemed any man's fingers might crush them, he thought of the jade bracelet in the shop window above and knew why the gods had sent him to the shop of the mender of shoes.

"Thou hast shoes to be well mended for few cash?" queried the old shopkeeper suavely and without embarrassment, for all men know that a father's rights in the matter of his children transcend criticism or question.

"I come not in quest of mended shoes," answered Wong.

"Why then comest thou?" demanded the shoemaker less cordially.

"To buy thy daughter, even the little Lily-flower of wondrous beauty who kneels beside thee."

Frightened eyes looked into Wong You's, and a quickly indrawn breath of fresh fear swelled the girl's tiny breast.

"To buy for mine own thy daughter, aye—in wifedom," he added with slow impressiveness, and saw the eyes of the girl-woman change to two dark pools of gratitude that now looked into his face unafraid. The faintest of sighs—unexpected happiness lay behind it—passed the little lips. She bowed her head submissively and waited.

KONG looked at Wong You with questioning amazement. He noted his clothes, worn and much-mended. A glance at the fisherman's rope-calloused hands betrayed the sort of labor that supplied his rice.

"Thou wouldst buy my daughter!" the father repeated derisively. "Thy words are fair, but words buy naught of me. In what coin and for what price wilt thou buy Soon Lo, whose beauty is priceless?"

"In the yellow coin of the *fan quai*, and her price shall be one hundred pieces of their gold," answered Wong, deliberately doubling the overheard offer of Bock Eye. Incredulous, curious and mystified was Kong by this un-Chinese prodigality.

"When to be paid into my hands?" he demanded suspiciously.

"Fifty pieces on the morrow at the fourth hour of the sun's decline. Fifty pieces also on the first day of the new moon

when Soon Lo, whose beauty shames Heaven's flowers, shall depart from thy house to mine—her husband's."

Wong You's confident directness was convincing, and Kong hurriedly blessed the gods that he had not bound himself to accept Bock Eye's lesser offer. A hundred pieces of gold! He could see them, feel them, hear their comforting clink within his sleeve. He visioned an old age of idleness and rich comfort.

"So be it," he agreed. "Fifty pieces of gold on the morrow, and the bond shall be sealed. But harken, O youth of great wealth: fail not at the fourth hour to soothe mine eyes with the price of thy debt."

Hero-worship, fresh-born, was in the girlish eyes which followed Wong You as he turned from Kong with a nod of untroubled acquiescence and reascended the stairs. He did not look at nor speak to Soon Lo, being well versed in courtesy and propriety. But on the street the fisherman, now more than ever a dreamer of dreams, stopped again before the jeweler's window to pleasure his eyes with the sight of a jade bracelet so beautiful it well was worthy of the tiny arm of the Lily who was Kong's daughter. Then, without the faintest idea of where or how he might obtain fifty pieces of gold on the morrow, Wong You thrust his hands into his empty sleeve-pockets and returned to the *long*-house of the Four Brothers.

As he entered, the Aged One behind the counter beckoned to him and handed him a single coin of gold.

"By Ning Foo was this left for thee, with the message that short debts father long friendships," he said. Wong You had forgotten the debt, but he seized the coin with joyous avidity.

"The good gods in their mercy forgive and again labor in my behalf," he cried, and straightway he returned to Bock Eye's fan-tan game. On the way he debated his choice of the four numbers.

"The Lily of wondrous beauty and I but now were two," he argued. "Also, beyond doubt, Bock Eye's gold shall make us one. Therefore, assuredly it is truth that following two must come one. So shall I wager the coin sent from the gods by the hands of Ning Foo."

WONG YOU'S reappearance at the gaming-table was greeted with a quick murmur of excited interest. Those there hoped to see a second spectacular attack upon Bock Eye's strong-box of gold. They were disappointed. He waited without making a wager until two appeared a winner, then laid his one modest gold piece on the first square. He won and picked up his four coins. Then patiently he waited until two appeared again, and repeated his tactics. When he won, he picked up his money; when he lost, he doubled his wager on the following deal. The bored onlookers soon drifted away. The game went on and on.

Several times Wong was within a single bet of his goal—fifty pieces of gold. And then, as if his gods begrudged their long-continued favor, their fickle humor changed and he lost steadily until half his capital was gone. Again he won until only a double coin separated him from the two score and ten he coveted, then lost four consecutive times. The night grew old. The number of players dwindled until at last Wong You alone remained. He glanced at the clock. It was the fourth hour of the new day. He was to pay over his fifty pieces of gold at the fourth hour of the afternoon. He counted his money. He had forty-four pieces.

"Again four becomes the omen of the gods," he thought. "As it was commanded in the beginning, so is it commanded now. Assuredly four will win."

He laid a double bet on four and won. His fifty pieces of gold at last were achieved. Smilingly he pouched them, and smilingly he refused when Bock Eye urged him to continue.

"Already tonight have I taken riches from thee," he answered.

"Callest thou fifty pieces of gold riches, when thou hast lost many times that earlier?" taunted the gambler.

"Aye, even so; for by it I shall possess a priceless jewel that thou dost covet—a jewel now lost to thee forever by Heaven's will," the fisherman replied.

"What meanest thou?"

"In the fourth hour of the sun's decline thou shalt hear," were Wong You's parting words. With grateful heart he returned to the *long*-house and peacefully he slept, with the vision of softly rounded cheeks of the hue of faded ivory, and dark eyes that looked happily and unafraid into his, to comfort his dreams.

As Wong You descended to Kong's shop precisely on the stroke of the fourth afternoon hour, he heard the voice of Bock Eye raised in angry argument within.

(Continued on page 112)

By
George
Gibbs



Illustrated
by the
Author

Mamselle Chérie

The Story So Far:

THE gilded youth of 1921 glowed doubly golden in Cherry Mohun. Wealth was hers, and great beauty; hers too were the fine verve and freedom of a generation that had repudiated restraint—hers the cocktails in teacups, the casual swear-word, the midnight motoring at high speed, and the love-making that was not slow.

To young-old Doctor David Sangree—a scientist just returned to his America after some years spent abroad in research and in work for the Near East Relief—to him, Cherry was at once a problem, a delight and a horror. Sangree had been introduced to Cherry and her family by his lawyer George Lycett, partly because Lycett had invested Sangree's funds (of which he had been in charge during the scientist's absence abroad) in enterprises managed by Cherry's self-made millionaire father.

Something in Sangree's first obvious amazement at Cherry's most undébutante sophistication provoked the girl to shock him further; and when her father spoiled an afternoon for her by requesting that she spend it entertaining Sangree, the girl sought revenge. She dared Sangree to go riding with her. And when he accepted, she had him ride her brother's vicious horse Centipede.

Sangree was thrown, but he got into the saddle again and rode Centipede to a finish ahead of Cherry and her mount. Only when they had returned, and Sangree slid from the saddle in a faint at the gate of the stableyard, did Cherry realize that Sangree's arm had been broken. This was the beginning of a growing friendship between these two so-different people.

Soon afterward calamity came to Cherry. Her father failed in business; and one night while she was out joy-riding with an ex-soldier friend, Jim Cowan, Mohun suffered a paralytic stroke.

CHAPTER IX

IF the girl of today is properly considered in relation to her associations by the indulgent recorder of social history, he will find her more their victim than their agent. A life after all is merely the sum of one's collective impressions, and when custom conspires to bring into the few short years of adolescence the excitations of a whole lifetime, the wonder is not that the conduct of the girl of today

is not exemplary, but that she has any sense of moral obligation whatever.

It is doubtful whether Cherry Mohun (or indeed any other girl of her set) ever gave a thought in any such terms to the provocations which surrounded her. Indeed, it is extremely doubtful whether she thought at all about the moral aspect of her indulgences. She took life as she found it, like a humming bird in a garden, sipping as she pleased from flower to flower, radiant in the sunshine by her own delights. And as with the humming bird, her responsibility ended with the gratification of her appetites.

One couldn't say that Cherry was unmoral any more than one could say that a humming bird was unmoral. If she was unmoral, it was as Dr. Johnson's dog was an infidel, in that "he had never thought upon the subject." Cherry had never thought with a great deal of seriousness about anything, and those brief moments of self-communion which David Sangree had noted with approval seemed merely the outcroppings of a rich vein of valuable metal that lay far beneath the surface and which remained to be discovered even to Cherry herself. She was a fine young pagan, in fact, with the mere glimmerings of a conscience, tolerably respectful of the opinions of others, so long as they did not obtrude upon her own, and intensely loyal in the few beliefs in externals which she had imbibed from the world. Could she have been born at the proper time and caught young enough, she would have made a splendid Druid priestess or a passionate Christian martyr—and even combated the wild beast sent out to devour her.

It was this kind of devotion to her friendships which made her the center of the group in which she moved, and she was quick to resent a slight or an insult to anyone she liked. She liked Bruce Cowan—admired him intensely. He had been a "peach" to her in Paris, and so when after the war he came to New York to live, she tried to make her friends swallow him, horns, hoofs and tail.

But Cherry had a feeling that her missionary work was not quite successful, and that there were those in even her own "set" who were not prepared to accept her friend without reservations. And so, since Cherry could not meet him as often as she liked in people's houses, she met him elsewhere. That was her way of showing her resentment to those who ignored him—against her mother even, whose antagonism was quite the least difficult to endure. Just because he was a salesman in the Magnificent Motors Company and not a Bartou, a Chichester or a Galbraith!

Mrs. Mohun's social ambition was getting just a little on Cherry's nerves. Hadn't she gone against her will to luncheon with John Chichester and the old Chichester dodo, his mother; submitted to impertinent questions from the old lady about her tastes, her talents, her health and a number of other things that were nobody's business but her own? Hadn't she been stifled with stodgy magnificence and stuffed with Victorian maxims? Hadn't she yielded to her mother's blandishments and made a martyr of herself during the loveliest hours of a sunny winter afternoon? And all because her mother wanted her to marry John Chichester. Well, she wouldn't marry him. She wasn't going to open a home for decayed gentlemen

of middle age who wanted to settle down! Besides, she didn't like the shape of his nose, or the wisp of mustache or the little abrupt way he had of pulling at it—oh, a thousand things! Imagine being Mrs. Demi-John! Impossible!

She ran down the steps joyfully, and into her roadster, which had been brought around from the garage. She felt like one who has just been liberated from a prison, taking deep breaths of the keen air that was full of frosty sunshine. "On the loose!" She grinned as she thought of the effect of the phrase on her mother, as she emerged from that atmosphere of social sanctification.

Cherry drove westward through the Park, picked up Bruce Cowan at the office of



She could not help hearing the parting shot of the tinted lady over her shoulder:

the Magnificent Motors Company, and then made for the Speedway and the country which lay beyond. Distance meant nothing to Cherry except as ground which was to be covered in a given time, and the exactions of the traffic policemen having been grudgingly met, in a short while they were bowling along in the general direction of Albany, with no particular object in view except to find as many fine straight stretches of road as possible, and to pass over them with the greatest speed consistent with the bare preserving of life and limb.

Among other reasons, Cherry liked Bruce Cowan because he knew more about the diseases of motors than anyone she had ever

met. She liked to talk about motors and their troubles, and the relative merits of different makes of cars. These were the chief topics of discussion among the young people that she knew, unless they were talking about one another; and Bruce Cowan, more than any other, spoke with the voice of authority. Her roadster was a Magnificent which her companion had sold her, and it had lived beautifully up to its expensive reputation.



"Say, aint that a scream! Bruce, you'd better take her back to the Ritz."

They had spun off the last five miles of a lonely road in something less than four minutes, and Cherry shut off the power and sank back into the low seat with a sigh of gratification.

"That was great—great!"

"She's a lady, isn't she?" he muttered triumphantly. "Hand made, every inch. Not even warm. If you could buy good gasoline, she'd jump the river—fact."

"I love it. Glad I didn't get the K. K.," she said.

"Oh, say, Cherry, you couldn't have bought the K. K. with me selling the Magnificent—even if it wasn't all I claimed for it."

"I like *that*! Think I'd have bought it just because of *you*?"

"Sure thing," said Cowan. "You like me enough to have done that for me, don't you?"

"Now! You needn't get so pleased with yourself all of a sudden, Bruce Cowan."

"Love me—love my dog. You love the car; you've got to love me too."

"That doesn't follow," she said with a laugh.

"It ought to. It will." The road was quite deserted. He bent over her and laid his hand over hers on the wheel. "Say, Cherry, tell me: you'll marry me, wont you?"

"Look out!" Cherry's toe pressed the accelerator, and the car lurched violently forward. He bore himself in patience until she reduced her speed, and then he said with a laugh:

"You little devil! What did you do that for?"

"Embarrassment," she said coolly.

"Hm! I'm not going to let you off so easily."

"Aren't you? What are you going to do?"

"This." And he shut off the power, holding her hands and blocking her touch of the accelerator with his foot. "Now answer me!"

"Cave-man stuff!" she muttered.

"Yes, if you like." And he kissed her.

"Let go my hands," she gasped, stifled.

"No," he said, and then more quietly: "Damn it, Cherry, you've got to listen. I love you. You ought to know it by now. I'm keen for you. Honest, I am. And you wouldn't want to come out with me if you didn't like me a lot. Tell me you'll marry me."

"I don't like to be pawed, Bruce," she said, struggling.

"Please! Answer me."

"Let me go."

She struggled, and he released her, content to await his time. For a moment she preened herself, taking off one gauntlet and rubbing her wrist. The gauntlet she negligently

dropped over the side of the car to the ground.

"I'd never marry a cave man," she flashed at him as she put her toe on the starter.

"I didn't mean to be rough," he said sullenly.

"But you were. You've bruised my wrist."

"I'm sorry." He tried to catch it to his lips, but she jerked away.

"I don't like to be kissed. When I decide to be, I'll tell you so."

"Cherry! Don't be cruel."

She made a motion of searching for her gauntlet, and then peering over the side of the car gave a slight sound of surprise.

"My glove, Bruce," she said calmly. "I've dropped it."

Completely disarmed by the tone of her voice, and wishing to placate her, he got out awkwardly. He was just passing

around the rear of the car when the polished surface of the rumble slipped deftly out from under his grasping fingers, while the roar of the exhaust left him gasping in a blue cloud of vapor. Cherry and the car were thirty yards away before he realized the possibilities of the situation. Then she came to a stop and grinned at him with diabolical sweetness.

"Cave man!" she taunted.

He bent over and picked up the glove, deliberating.

"Cave man!" she repeated, more sweetly.

"Oh, say, Cherry," he began, walking toward her, still keeping his dignity. But Cherry moved slowly on at the distance which she considered a proper one.

"Come on, Bruce," she cried.

He walked faster. Cherry drove more rapidly.

He stopped; so did Cherry. It was an enjoyable game for her, a most exasperating one for him.

"It's a long walk to Poughkeepsie, but you can make it by ten o'clock if you hurry. I'll pace you, Bruce."

Putting on speed, she left him standing, sheepish, in the middle of the road.

She had no intention of deserting him, but it amused her to drive away and leave him to his six-feet-one of injured dignity. Besides, it would give him time to cool off. Bruce Cowan was one of the few men whose very presence provided her with a sense of subdued excitement. It was this which attracted her—his bulk, his square chin and the mystery that lay behind a character which was less familiar to her than those of the boys whom she had always known.

But it was ridiculous how easily she had vanquished him. She grinned complacently at the occupants of a passing "flivver," drove a little farther and then turned the car and waited, thinking.

Why was it that peril always fascinated her? The peril of Dicky Wilberforce and his flying! Danger—excitement! Always to go one step farther without coming a cropper. Bruce Cowan had sworn a dozen times that he loved her, but he had never kissed her before. His kiss had only left her cold, cunning and resentful. She liked the constant danger of his mauling her, but she would have died rather than let him do it. To tame him—to keep him tamed—that was a game worth playing, which made the small talk of the Carrington's dinner-table seem a most trivial amusement.

A FEATHER of snow came out of the dusk and moistened her cheek, recalling her to a sense of time and obligation. Twenty minutes had passed since she left him. So she drove back rapidly, spearing the dusk with her searchlight, which at last picked out Bruce Cowan sitting on a fence-rail, smoking a cigarette. She stopped. "Well," she asked calmly, "are you chastened?"

He climbed deliberately down.

"No," he muttered, "just chilly."

"Oh, then, perhaps I'd better drive off again."

"Just as you please," he said with a shrug.

She stared at him in silence for a moment, her toe poised above the accelerator. Frankly, though she knew that he had won, she rather admired his attitude, which was true to form.

"Oh, get in," she said carelessly. "We can't be stopping here all night."

"Thanks," he said, throwing his cigarette away and climbing in.

"But just keep to your own side of the car, will you?" she insisted.

"Oh, all right," he laughed.

"Where are we now—really?" she asked.

"Somewhere in Putman County, I guess," he said vaguely.

"And I've a dinner at eight."

"It's half-past six now. You could never make it."

"I've got to."

"H-m! Still angry?"

"No. It's not worth being angry about."

"Oh, I'm glad to hear you say that. It isn't really. But you don't have to go back. If you're not angry, you can prove it."

"How?"

"By taking dinner with me somewhere out here and going back later."

"Oh, I couldn't," she gasped, rather attracted by the thought nevertheless.

"There you go," he muttered, "always trying to get away from me. Let's see how much you care. Come, now. We'll drive down to Peekskill and have dinner. Then a dance at the Red Horse afterwards. It's a road house near Tarrytown. Jazz. You'll like it. It's different."

"Oh, Bruce, I oughtn't to."

But the idea caught in her mind and remained there, meshed in the chaos of half-educated impulses. It was the unusual which always attracted her, and—there was Bruce, humbled now, more threatening even in his humility.

"You oughtn't to ask me, Bruce."

"Why not? I've got some rights, haven't I?"

"No, none," she said, frowning. And then with a quick gasp: "But I'll go with you."

"You will?" he cried, delighted. "Oh, say, you're a good little sport, after all."

They had come to a crossroad. Cherry always liked crossroads. They always seemed significant.

"Which way, Bruce?" she asked.

"Right. We'll make the river, somewhere."

BY day the Red Horse Tavern, nestling modestly in its clean hills above the river, bore the chaste exterior of a Colonial dwelling. But its appearance from the front was deceptive, for at the rear of the house a large building had been added, to conform to the increasing patronage of its guests, which were many by day, many more by night. For the dance-hall had gained a popularity among persons of a certain class, both in city and country, and for more than a year the Inn had enjoyed a reputation which other places of amusement more elaborate and expensive might have envied. Here there was immunity of a sort from the restrictions of the Volstead Act, whether by collusion or neglect, no one seemed to care.

It was long after eleven o'clock when Bruce Cowan and Cherry drove into the parking-place beside the Inn, having been held up by a blow-out. They had dined at a place he knew in Peekskill quite comfortably and rather glumly, though Bruce by some magic had produced cocktails in teacups, one of which Cherry had demurely sipped.

The sound of the jazz at the Red Horse got into Cherry's feet before she had reached the porch, for this, as she realized at once, was the real thing—no modern hotel orchestra with its sophisticated "rag," but the barbaric jazz itself straight from the jungle. The piano and violin played by quick, apish hands were more the vehicle of cadence than tune; and the real meaning of the music was in the banjos and the drums, lineal descendants of gourds and tom-toms.

She was a little dismayed at the appearance of the crowd, but intensely curious about it all.

Bruce Cowan's fingers were at her elbow.

"They're not our sort, Bruce. Do you think I'd better?"

"H-m! You're not afraid, are you?" he laughed.

If there was any one phrase more provocative to Cherry to do and dare, it was the one her companion used. Afraid! She tilted her chin at him scornfully.

"Come on, then," she muttered.

They danced. Cowan's strong arm reassured her, and the witch-doctor at the drums had already put a spell upon her feet. Afraid! A turn around the floor, and she had caught the infection of the place. She saw rough caricatures of people she knew, like the dances themselves, and the familiar tunes played so unfamiliarly. She couldn't help thinking that this was what her friends in New York wanted to do, yet did not dare.

And yet, except for the music, the people were like the people who danced in cabarets in New York. She even thought she saw faces that were familiar to her.

BRUCE COWAN seemed to be enjoying himself immensely, and, in spite of a feeling of intense loyalty to her previous conceptions of him, she couldn't keep feeling that he was more at home in this atmosphere than at the supper-table at Genie Armitage's dance.

As she suddenly felt the oppression of the atmosphere, she stopped dancing and sat for a moment on a bench near the door, which had been left open to let in some of the clean night air. Bruce Cowan wanted to order something to drink, but she refused.

It would have been different from taking cocktails before or wine at dinner at the house of a friend. To drink here would have seemed to make her definitely a part of these people, to make her a sharer in rather wanton rites. Indeed, she was not quite certain that she ought not to be going home at once.

It was while debating the matter that she heard her companion's name spoken. A girl was standing in front of them—a tall girl, with hair a trifle too yellow, her lips and cheeks tinted with an overelaboration which came from practice with grease-paint. She bobbed her head pertly.



"Don't pity me!" The words came in a rush while she struggled for self-command. "Not me. None of us needs to be pitied but—Father."

"Hello, Bruce," she said.

It was the first time that Cherry had ever seen Bruce Cowan at a disadvantage. He got up, frowning. "How are you, Maisie?" he muttered. And then he awkwardly rose and talked in a lowered tone, completely excluding Cherry. Cherry looked in another direction, most uncomfortable, but she could not help hearing the parting shot of the tinted lady over her shoulder, meant for Cherry's ear:

"Say—aint that a scream! Bruce, you'd better take her back to the Ritz."

As Bruce Cowan turned, Cherry rose.

"Get my wraps, please," she said.

Her companion met her glance for a moment uncertainly, and then without word in reply, turned and obeyed. Neither of them spoke until they were in the machine—Bruce because he didn't know what to say, Cherry because if she spoke, she knew that she would say something that she would regret.

"I didn't introduce you, Cherry. She isn't your sort."

"Why explain?" said Cherry.

"Nice girl, friend of a fellow at the office."

"Really."

"I just thought I'd tell you."

"Thanks."

"I just thought you might have thought she was *my* friend."

"Who?"—coolly.

"The blonde—Maisie."

"Well, *isn't* she?" The word "friend," as Bruce Cowan understood it, meant nothing to Cherry.

"Well—er—yes—in a way. But she's not your sort, you know."

"So you said."

"Don't be sore, Cherry. I hardly know her."

Cherry merely laughed.

She meant it to mean unutterable indifference, and succeeded. But for all her placid exterior, the spark of conscience was flaming, burning in her breast. Cherry knew very well that she shouldn't have gone with Bruce Cowan. He shouldn't have taken her to a place like that. He should have known (*Continued on page 156*)

White Magic

By

M. L. C. Pickthall



Illustrated by Audubon Tyler

LOBELIA is a new residential suburb on the outskirts of a new town that is itself on the outskirts of most things. The big Woods come right down to the streets of Lobelia; bears have been seen on Frontenac Boulevard, and last summer a skunk slept in the Presbyterian Church, which had to be closed for three weeks in consequence. Yes, Lobelia is pretty new—but not so new that you'd expect to smell kinnikinnick there.

Yet one still June evening a savor of kinnikinnick passed along Frontenac Boulevard and down Center Street and up Magnetewan Avenue. Here and there an old-timer, relegated to carpet slippers and a back bedroom, sniffed it and dreamed of prairie and poplar-bluff and the Blackfoot brave outside the H. B. C. store. Leigh Harvey, busy lifting dandelions from his beautiful new lawn with a dental-looking instrument, dropped it and knelt motionless in the growing dew. He set his big hands on his hips, because they trembled suddenly. To himself he whispered: "It *couldn't* be him—come at last—after all these years!"

He drew a deep breath. The smell was yet in the air. He raised his keen eyes slowly from the dandelions and looked across the hedge of starry tobacco-flowers that screened his new iron fence.

He had been sure of what he would see. Yet when he saw, it was with a shock that for a moment kept him motionless.

At the base of the gaudy fence a man was sitting, smoking a little blackened corncob pipe. He was a mere kernel of a little brown old man within the husks of many formless garments. On the grass-edge beside him was a peddler's basket.

Leigh Harvey, leading citizen of Lobelia and elder of the church the skunk had slept in, rose silently to his feet. He was shaking. His strong mouth twitched. His eyes were guarded,

watchful but triumphant. He leaned across his new iron gate with the gold knobs on it and said: "Hello there!"

His voice was rough with emotion held in check—for four years. The old peddler looked up sidewise, cautiously. He twitched the shiny cloth cover off the big basket. "Bootlaces," he began mechanically, "pipes, ver' cheap pipes, plugs, machine-oil, needles, pills, ver' good chewin'-gum."

Harvey looked down into the basket, and his sight blurred. "Just the same!" he said under his breath. "I'll bet they're the same identical handkerchiefs. Wonder if he's got poached mink-pelts under 'em this time!" The thin blue reek of the peddler's pipe rose on the air, the smoke of an incantation, and the past descended on Harvey like a flood.

"Buttons," continued the old voice patiently, "stickin'-plaster, spools, Emerey's Expectorant, ver' nice handkerchiefs."

He shook a faded red rag out of the basket. Harvey leaned over the gate, his new gold watch-chain tinkling against the iron. "You come far?" he said, as carelessly as he could.

"Ver' long way, boss." The old man pointed north with his pipe-stem. He dangled the faded handkerchief hopefully.

"You travel about much, this way?"

"All over, boss." The old bronze hands began to refold the red handkerchief without disappointment. "All over!"

"Stop," said Harvey suddenly. "I want to buy that. How much?"

"Ten cent. Ver' nice handkerchief."

The silver coin changed hands. The old man shook the ashes from his pipe into his palm and scattered them to the winds. He began to strap his basket. Harvey said: "What else you got in there?"

"Spools, boss, tobac', plug or cut, chewin'-gum, bootlaces—"

"You aint," said Harvey slowly, "you aint got any more—houses and gardens in there?"

"I forget, boss. I know fellers all over."

The old man was sending Harvey the swift, impenetrable glances of a wild thing frightened. He was strapping his basket quickly. Harvey, gripping the gate in his excitement, spoke commandingly.

"Wait. I got something to tell you. Wait."

The old peddler hesitated, then silently acquiesced. He squatted once more at the foot of the fence, relighted his pipe, and prepared to listen. Once more, with the faint blue spiral of kinnikimick smoke, the lost years came down on Harvey like a wave.

"There was a man," began Harvey abruptly, "a man who was down and out, five years ago."

He hesitated a moment. The peddler glanced up at him. "Most fellers been that," he suggested.

"Most fellers been that," agreed Harvey slowly, "but not many have the bad luck this one did. And one can't rightly say it was his fault. He'd fought it. My faith, how he'd fought his luck for years! But it just seemed that everything he touched went wrong. Year by year he went down, and down—and a little bit

farther down. He tried farmin', but he hadn't enough capital to tide over the bad seasons. He tried prospectin', and his health give out. He tried school-teachin', but he didn't know enough." Harvey's strong mouth twitched under the heavy gray mustache. "At last," he said quietly, "this feller got so far down that he was workin' for a Chink—for a Chinaman that kep' a little store way up in the hills."

A new automobile whirled down the new asphalt of Magnetewan Avenue. The driver waved a cordial hand at Harvey, and the big man waved back, watching the shiny thing with absent eyes until it was out of sight.

"When that job failed," he went on after a silence, "Gammett got him."

He glanced at the old peddler's back, every fold of the rags covering it instinct with listening. "If you *don't* know Gammett," he went on again, "I'll have to tell you. Gammett had a store too, a big store. He made a fortune by helping people. Yes, he was very helpful, was Gammett. If a man was in bad luck, or sick, or'd been on the bust and spent all his money, Gammett was right there, ready to help. He'd

supply goods, would Gammett, at his own prices. Many a feller that had Gammett's help in the bad years has spent all he made in the good years, payin' off Gammett. Yes. Every down-and-outer in the hills got on Gammett's books sooner or later. When they was on good and plenty, Gammett ground 'em—to powder. This feller, this down-and-outer I was tellin' about, he was on Gammett's books, and Gammett ground him hard. Gammett got him. And I hope,"—Harvey's big fist gripped and quivered on the gilded iron,—"*I hope Death an' Judgment's got Gammett!*"

After a moment the heat went out of him. He glanced keenly at the peddler's back. "If you'd been at Gammett's store," he said, "one fall day five years ago, if you'd been sittin' on a log in front of the store waitin' to see Gammett on the quiet to sell him some mink-pelts poached off the Government reserve, then



The quick glance of the black eyes was wary.

"This here," went on Harvey, indicating the house behind him, the finest in Lobelia, "this here come out of a basket like that."

The old face creased slowly into a hundred doubtful wrinkles. With a gesture that said, "That may be a good joke, but it's beyond me!" the peddler went on covering his basket. Harvey was beset by a fear that the old man would yet slip out of his hold; he seemed so alien a thing to the streets of Lobelia that Harvey half expected him suddenly to grow fur and drop on all fours and melt away into the shadows.

"Stop a bit," he said desperately. "I want to ask you, did you ever know a feller called Gammett?"

"M-m-m?"

"Feller called Gammett—Gammett."

you'd have seen this feller I'm telling about. He was sitting on the log too, sitting there with his head in his fists, staring at two little parcels on the ground between his boots. There was a pound of tea in one. There was some rolled oats in the other. He'd just give Gammett his silver watch for 'em, the last thing he had left, the very last. He hadn't even hope or courage left. He was down and out."

The peddler on the other side of the fence took his pipe out of his mouth. He turned his old head and stared at Harvey steadily with his impenetrable eyes. Harvey met the look as steadily. By and by the old man turned away and resumed his listening.

In a low voice Harvey said: "As I told you, there was another man sitting on that log. He was an old man—even then. He looked kind of—poor, but not so's he was worrying any about it. He had a brown face, like yours—a long coat, like yours—and a big basket like your basket."

"Some way, them two on the log got talkin'. And the down-and-outer, he told the old man just what I been telling you."

"He told him more. Why? I dunno. It just happens sometimes that when a feller's beat out, he'll talk. This feller talked. He said: 'It aint for myself I mind so much. It's for her.'"

"'You married?' says the old man. And the down-and-outer, he says: 'Yes. Eight years ago. We aint been apart since. But the life's too rough for her.'"

Harvey glanced back at the house. He went on after a moment: "The down-and-outer, he said: 'You see, she's not just like other folks, not just the same. . . . We had two kids, and we—lost them. It was too rough for them too. I wasn't able to do all I should,' he said, 'and they died. Since then, she's not—just right. She thinks, if we had a garden, they'd come back, the kids would. A white garden, she wants—a garden full of white flowers, and a white cat. Then she thinks they'd come back to play. And the grief of it is,' says the feller, 'that she'd need so little to make her happy, kind-of, and that I can't get it for her.' Then he cursed Gammett and got up, and struck off down the trail, home."

HARVEY'S strong voice failed, sank to a whisper. He stood leaning on the gate, motionless. The old man on the grass outside was as motionless as he. At last he said softly: "D'you see anything—queer—about my garden, friend?"

The peddler's answer came slowly. "All the flowers in it are white flowers."

"That's right. All the flowers are white. But wait."

"This feller, he went off down the trail, home. It was late, and it looked like a bad night. He'd gone maybe a half-mile when some one overhauled him; he saw it was the old peddler he'd been talking to. The old man, he stops the down-and-outer and puts a little packet in his hand."

"'What's this?' said the feller. And the peddler said: 'To make a garden for the children,' he said, just like that, and turned away and was gone before the feller could say: 'Thank you!'"

"He's been waitin'," said Harvey gently, "to say, 'Thank you,' ever since."

Evening was closing to a perfect night. White flowers fell from the locust-trees along the grass, and moths as white and silent haunted the garden of white flowers. A woman came from the house and stood on the white steps as if she were watching something in the garden shadows; and a white cat rubbed against her dress. Harvey's voice, when it came, was hushed; yet it seemed to break a silence as perfect as a pearl.

"When the feller I been tellin' you about looked at the little packet, he saw there was writing on it. It said,"—Harvey spoke as if reading from memory,—"*'White Columbine. Hardy perennial. Sow in autumn in carefully prepared soil.'* . . . Do you see anything queer about the flowers in my garden, friend?"

Again the answer came slowly from the other side of the fence. "There are many of one kind." The old man stretched a hand through the bars and lightly touched one blossom of a thousand white columbines.

"That's right. . . . And when the feller had read the writing, he gave a kind thought to the peddler, and put the packet of seeds in his pocket, and forgot it."

"He'd enough to make him forget more things than a packet of flower seeds an old peddler had give him. If you knew those hills, you'd know that there was storms on 'em that leap on a man like wolves. He was caught in one, and all night he was lost on the mountains."

"Level rain that drove against his face like a wall, wind that

bruised the livin' flesh on his bones, sleet to glass the rocks, and a moon no more than a blot in the scud—he knew no more of the night. He kep' goin' some way, thinkin' of the woman that waited for him; if he hadn't fixed his mind on her, he'd have just give up and laid down and died, for the weather used him cruel and he'd no heart to fight it. Only because of her! Then he found he'd missed the trail, and he didn't greatly care—only for her."

"He went on in the dark and the storm, tryin' to strike back to the trail lower down. He couldn't make it. Seemed as if he was in hills he'd never been in before, so strange and wild they was with the dark. He climbed black, streamin' rocks, and slopes of thin grass, and crashed into spruce-scrub, and crawled by black pits and hollers. At last the rain beat him down, and the wind dazed him, and he fell."

"He thought he fell into death. He did fall a long way, but not that far. He came to, very weak, sprawled on a slope of loose stones. If he moved, they moved too. He'd no wish to move for a while. He was knocked about some, and his clo'es was half tore off his back, but after a bit he thought of his wife, and got to his hands and knees, groaning. Yes, he was knocked about considerable."

THEN the moon came out clear. And he looked at—at what the slipping stones had uncovered!"

Harvey's voice shook a little. Presently he steadied it and went on briskly.

"Silver was worth a lot then, as it is now. Even in the dim moonlight he knew what he was lookin' at. He was lookin' at a vein of almost pure silver them slidin' stones had uncovered."

"He laid quite a long time, just lookin' at it. Then the situation come home to him."

"He didn't know where he was. He didn't know where the silver was. He couldn't get his bearings. He didn't dare mark the place too plain, for fear some one else'd find it. . . . After a while he made shift to build some little heaps of stones. I—wont say what else he did. Then he went on as well as he could. You see, if he'd stayed by the place till daylight, he'd have been dead in that weather. He had to risk it."

"He found his way back somehow. He never remembered anything of what happened after he left that place."

"He was near dead, and they thought he was ravin'. Maybe he was. He was sick a long spell. They were helped. When he was sick, folks was kind, and they took kindness where they'd have been too proud to take it before. . . . Even when he was sick, he fought to keep a tight hold on his tongue. When he could crawl, he went out to find his claim."

"He couldn't find it."

"Sweatin' and tremblin', the ghost of a man, day after day he wandered in the hills, lookin' for it. He quartered the ground like a hunting-dawg, but he couldn't find the place. There was a hundred spots like his memory of it, a thousand slopes of loose stones. The rain and the wind had swept his little rock-piles away. He had nothin' to go by. Wealth beyond all he'd thought of, all he'd struggled for, all he'd prayed for—for her—was there, somewhere in them hills under his feet, and he couldn't find it."

"Men thought he was mad. He let them think so. Maybe, as the time went on, he was pretty near mad."

"For the winter went, and the spring, and still he was trampin' the hills, seekin' the claim he couldn't find."

A PAUSE. The peddler said nothing; Harvey went on: "He began, then, to look as if he was mad. A gaunt thing in rags! I dunno how he and the woman lived at all in them days. I dunno. He didn't do any work. He was all the time lookin' for his claim."

Harvey glanced up at a star limned in a sky clear as water. "I hope," he said under his breath, "all he said and thought and did in them days is forgiven him. If his soul was black in him, can you wonder? If he was ready to curse God and die, can you blame? After all, 'twasn't for himself he wanted it so bad."

"There was a day at last, a day in summer. He kind of woke up from a nightmare that day, and knew it was the end."

"He knew he was finished. He knew he couldn't go on no more. It's so, you know. A man gets his soul used up, same as his body, when things is too much again' him. He knew—why, he knew he just couldn't go on. . . . He went out into the hills that day, just the same. But he was through with it. The dirty tricks of Life had downed him. He was flat on his back, laid out on the mat, in the great Ring that's seen the finish of better men than he."



"Then the moon came out clear. And he looked at—at what the slipping stones had uncovered!"

"He kissed his wife. He didn't take a pick nor a shovel that day to dig rocks with. He took his old gun. And he told her—God forgive him—that he was going to shoot birds.

"He went away, miles about the hills. Everything looked new and strange to him—like things do when you're lookin' your last on 'em. . . . He didn't regard where he was goin'. It was all one. At last he came to a valley under great rocks where the spruce clung with roots like snakes. He'd no memory of it. He sat down and set the gun between his knees and slipped off his boot."

Harvey's voice checked, faltered. For the first time he moved. He leaned across the fence and laid a big hand that shook a little on the shoulder of the old man squatting in the dew.

"Only for that old peddler-man that give him the little packet of flower seeds," he said solemnly, "only fer him, that feller's bones'd be layin' among the rocks to this day, where the foxes had left 'em.

"For he had his toe on the trigger, friend, when he saw white flowers in bloom a few yards off at the foot of a slope of loose stones. White columbines!

"There's plenty of columbines wild in the hills, aint there? But these were the dovey kind, the garden ones. His eyes, that were so near shutting on the world forever, saw 'em for a minute without understanding. And then—"

Harvey paused again. His hand quivered on the old man's shoulder. "And then his memory gave him back some words. 'White Columbine,' he was reading off of the paper. 'Hardy perennial. Sow in autumn in carefully prepared soil.' He remembered putting the packet in his pocket, and then no more of it from then till now. He guessed how it had spilled out of his pocket when he fell in the storm. And the seed had filtered into

the cracks, and the sun had warmed it, and the rain had fed it. While he was ranging the hills like a lost soul, it was safe, and growing, and waiting for that moment—as if the Lord had laid His hand over it till the right time came. And now the time had come. That feller had come into the valley to die. And the little white flowers, like nests of doves, they bade him—live. He scraped away the loose stones. And there was his lode."

Harvey was silent. Silent as he, the old man took his pipe from his mouth and shook out the ashes. A drift of tiny red sparks sank and settled and died in the dew. The reek of the kinnikinnick died. The half-tropic breath of the locusts came into its own.

"That," said Harvey, "was the beginning of the White Columbine Mine. And ever since,"—his hand gripped the lean shoulder, his voice rang loud,—"and ever since then, that feller's been looking for the old man that gave him the flower seeds, and in so doing, gave him life, and fortune and—happiness. . . .

"And he thinks he's found him," finished Harvey huskily, leaning low over the fence, "he thinks he's found him at last."

After a time the peddler glanced up at him. He said, very gently: "W'at that feller—that good feller—want with the ol' man w'en he find him?"

"To give him anything he wants," said Harvey quietly.

"Bien?"

"If he wants a house, it's his," said Harvey. "If he wants a farm, it's his. Money, it's his. Anything he wants." He was smiling, but his keen eyes were dim. The shoulder under his strong hand was so frail, the coat so ragged, the face turned to his in the dusk so impenetrably old.

"And if that ol' pedler-man want nothing, my frien'?"

"Hey?"

(Continued on page 119)



Flowers of Fancy

By L. B. Yates

Illustrated by J. J. Gould

MORIARTY'S MUSICAL MAIDENS had not been doing well on the road, and although in a general way it is an unwise man who endeavors to diagnose the why's and wherefore's of the show-shops, there may have been cogent reasons for the substantial slump in box-office receipts and the consequent annihilation of Moriarty's bank-roll.

There are some matters that no writing man with an ounce of chivalry in his composition will touch upon, be it ever so lightly. The supreme sorcery of feminine charm and the wondrous witchery that has ever been associated with flounce and furbelow prohibits me from stating to any or all—except those of course who will regard the communication in the strictest confidence—that with one or two exceptions, Moriarty's Musical Maidens had long since left behind them the verdure-clad meadows of ingenuous débutantage and were nearing the turn of the trail, meandering down-grade to the silent places where sere and yellow tints of autumn predominate.

It must be admitted, moreover, that the mantle of extraordinary dramatic genius had never fallen upon the broad shoulders of Barney Moriarty. In gala days of the turf he had followed the fortunes of the racers, and being a keen judge of form, augmented by a certain sixth sense regarding the psychological moment, had succeeded in accumulating a bank-account of agreeable proportions. Then the gloom of bewhiskered uplift settled down upon the sport of kings, and simultaneously the Humming Bird, who was the busiest tout on the race-track, told Moriarty that the show-business afforded opportunity for the grandest gamble in the world. There was no exaggeration attached to this latter statement.

"It's as easy as easy, an' there aint no better time of the year to take out a turkey-show," counseled Moriarty's mentor.

"That last one went over the fence," interrupted the capitalist.

"A turkey-show? Gee, Moriarty, I'm astonished at your ignorance! Say, g'wan away. You're stringin' me. On the level, now, don't you know what a turkey-show is?"

"Never seen 'em coupled in the bettin' before," vouchsafed Moriarty, with the apologetic air of one who would sit at the feet of Wisdom.

His companion eyed him critically for a moment, waving his hands, palms outward, as if to brush away an unseen but inconceivable apparition of unconscionable helplessness. Then with an air of martyrdom he again took up the parable.

"Y'see, it's this way, Barney," volunteered the first aid to dramatic endeavor. "Y'see, it's this way—now, you take November. Well, along about the middle of the month, the shows that aint got no chance on the road an' which was goin' to flivver anyway, has died the death of a dog, an' it follers that all the actors an' actorines is lookin' for a soft spot to fall. D'y'e get me?"

Moriarty nodded shortly. "Go on—I'm listenin'," he affirmed.

"Well," continued the oracle, "that brings you close to Thanks-givin', an' there's a small army of agents an' half-baked show-folks layin' around the big cities hungry for the oyster-dressin' an' a juicy cut off of the second joint. So they get together a string of stranded scene-chewers, hike for the jungles, an' some of 'em brings home the turkey. There's many a guy with bookin'-office up on Forty-second Street, sportin' a speed-marvel, a chow dog an' a milliner's bill, that got his start with a turkey-show."

Moriarty's adviser wagged his head solemnly from side to side, pursed out his lips and thrust his hands deep into his pockets. "Yep," he concluded, "you take Bransfort, an' Kaywine, an' Locovitch an' Duffy. They all hit Broadway fresh from the shoestring trail; an' look at 'em now! Why, only the other day, the Morning *Bugle* had a whole page of an interview with Duffy, which gives his dope on the dangers surroundin' the female end of the drama."

"Well," apologized Moriarty, "how could I be hep? Aint they changin' the names of everything nowadays? But shucks, what's the use of argufyin'? All you got to do is to tell me how to get the stable together, an' I'll tend to the rest. That's fair enough, aint it?"



"This is a new one," he soliloquized. "I'll fall for it once—it might unearth a real adventure."

"Ab-so-lutely," returned the other. "Ab-so-lutely! For a starter, Moriarty, you only need a pencil an' a pad of paper. Leave it to me to do the scribble act, an' we'll be on our way. First off, we'll put in an advertisement callin' for all kinds of show-folks which can double in brass or comedy acts; then after we see what we get, an' match 'em up, nature'll do the rest."

"Men an' women?" interrogated Moriarty.

"Doves an' pelicans, for the most part," attested the Humming Bird. "Then we need a straight comedy guy, a couple of *Perl-*

*mutter*s and *Potashes*, a black-face knockabout, an' a Oriental dancer for the blow-off."

"Sounds like tidin's fresh from the feed-box," agreed the prospective angel hopefully. "It's a layout which oughter get the money."

"A frame-up like that," vouchsafed the Humming Bird solemnly, "a frame-up like that would pull a show through all the gopher holes between Pocatello an' Pike's Peak."

"Say, Bird," grinned Moriarty, "you talk like you was hep to this hall-show game. Was you ever in it your own self?"

"Was I ever in the show-business?" The Humming Bird's voice was lifted in prayerful appeal even to the point of indignation. "Was I ever in the show-business? Born and raised in it; that's all. Didn't I play *Little Eva* in a *Tom* show till me voice fell into the cellar? An' aint I trouped through every tank from the Missouri River to Moose Jaw? If you had saw me play *Dr. Jekyll* an' *Mr. Hyde* at the old Curtis Street Theater in Denver, you would of thought I was a three-to-five shot in stake company."

"But you never told me! You never mentioned it," broke in Moriarty.

"Let it go at that, Barney," laughed back the Bird. "What a feller don't know never keeps him awake nights. Now, listen, here's the program: You'll be manager back with the show an' will have the handlin' of all the kale that eases through the main drive. I'll be the busy business guy in advance—also story man an' chief of the bureau of publicity an' promotion."

"Is that an expensive job, Bird?" queried Moriarty nervously.

"Very little, if any—very little, if any," purred the Humming Bird soothingly. "All I need is a swindle-sheet to play around with an' about a hundred a week for cakes. Don't worry; I'll send you in right, an' won't carry no excess baggage. Just a line of laughin' language an' a grip-sack full of gumdrops."

"YOU was the last one I ever figured would tackle the business, Barney. It's tough enough on a feller like me that left it for the race-track an' hopped back again when the goin' got slippery. But it aint got no more use for you than a infant in arms has for a Gatlin' gun."

Joe Donovan, house-manager of the Ponce de Leon Theater, was talking. He was addressing the owner of Moriarty's Musical Maidens and spoke with sympathy and all the solicitude of an old friend.

"The reports on your show is mighty bad," he continued, "an' here you are driftin' in a week ahead of time. I heard how Jackson, over at the other town, canceled you; an' honest, if it hadn't of been that we was old pals, I would of dropped the flag in your face myself."

"If I was to tell you I've been doin' well, Joe," droned Moriarty, "I'd be like a guy that advertises money cheerfully refunded. It aint up to me to hand you a bum steer, so I'm goin' to say that I'm carryin' top weight in the get-away stakes, an' let it go at that."

"Too bad, too bad!" sympathized the house-manager. "Where you made the great mistake, Barney, was in backin' into the game ay-tall."

"It was the Humming Bird which sent me in," explained the impres-

sario. "The racin' game went on the blink, an' he told me that the show-business was the grandest gamble in the world. He sure picked the right one that time."

"Yep," affirmed Donovan. "He staked you to the cheapest turkey-show that ever reached for a Thanksgiving dinner. They tell me that the outfit of spear-carriers you got would make a highwayman holler for help. Aint I known the Hummin' Bird as long as you have? He never had no excess baggage on the roof, but he's outclassed around here."

"Praps he's doin' the best he knows how, Joe," hazarded Moriarty.

"He sure is," returned the other. "He's been in town a week, an' as a lounge lizard he has 'em all backed off the boards. Why, any afternoon you kin see him over to the Galtmore, dippin' an' glidin' an' swingin' them long legs of his around as if he didn't care what became of 'em. He's a regular lion with the Caramel Club. Here you are, lettin' him draw down a circus salary as advance agent, an' so far, he aint got enough readers in the papers to carry the ads. Was you just figurin' on makin' a tourist out of him?"

"He aint a bad guy, Joe," Moriarty hastened to explain, "but I guess there's a lot about the business he don't know. I let him wish this flock of flivvers onto me, an' he kind of elected himself to the job. But it aint no use talkin' now; the numbers is hung up, an' I'm as flat as a flounder."

Moriarty hesitated, moved uneasily in his chair, then began to speak again as if determined to make a clean breast of the situation confronting him.

"Honest, Joe," he continued, "the show itself is a crime. We have dames in the front row that trouped with the original 'Black Crook.' An' if you was to take little Dot Davenport out of the cast,—I mean the girl that plays the violin,—there'd be nothin' left but a string of cheap sellin'-platers that a butcher wouldn't start on an electric-light merry-go-round."

"You aint never beat unless you think you're beat," interrupted Donovan hopefully. "Why don't you make one more grand break for liberty? Here comes this kid-glove agent of yours now. Rib him up and start him doin' somethin', if he only creates a riot in front of the house. If I was you, I'd take that *hombre* by the neck an' shake him until his teeth rattled. I'll just slide out the back door an' leave it to you to rig him with a electric saddle an' a buzzer. Give him the thirty-third—that's what he needs."

The Humming Bird entered the front door of the office. His hat was tilted at an angle of forty-five degrees, and he was whistling the latest rag.

"Hello, Barney," he began. "What's in the atmosphere now? Aint this a tall-grass town for to have to—"

But something in Moriarty's face warned the business manager that it was no time for an exchange of airy persiflage. He coughed, pulled up his collar uneasily and came to an abrupt pause.

"Where's the funeral?" he interrogated, with a labored effort to maintain his air of jocularly.

"Crape's on everythin' from the front door to the cook-tent," returned the manager sourly. "An' it don't look to me as though you was tryin' to make matters any better. When we started on our mad career, you told me you knew as much about this game as Gus Hill himself. An' here Donovan has just been askin' me whether you was a tourist or a press-agent. Of course, it's about all the same now, because I'm down to my last century, an' if we last to the end of next week, there'll have to be a new deal. Now, what I want you to do—"

"I gotta scheme, Barney," interrupted the Humming Bird, airily. "Gotta bear of a scheme—one that'll give her a runnin' start. Don't stick a knife into me until I tell you about it. Honest to

Every gesture showed that she was at a loss to account for the unexpected reception.



goodness, I like to broke a leg gettin' over here. It's a new one which aint never been pulled before, an' it'll draw like a suction pump."

"If it's anything like the rest of 'em, you can write your own ticket," intoned Moriarty pessimistically.

"It aint like nothin'," responded the Humming Bird. "It aint like nothin' you ever heard of before. Barney," breathed the Humming Bird mysteriously, "did you ever hear of Fair Flowers of Fancy?"

The manager grunted. "It's another wild-eyed wheeze. I can stand anythin' now," he returned in resigned tones.

"Listen, Barney," resumed the Bird impressively. "Listen. This aint no kid. If you think so, I'll lay you a little four-to-one that we pack 'em in Monday night. Look ahere, an' tell me if this aint a hand that's all blue, runnin' from the ace to big casino."

From the inside pocket of his coat the Humming Bird drew forth a delicately pink-tinted envelope which he opened with a flourish and then handed to his principal. Moriarty read as follows:

My dear Friend:

I guess perhaps you remember Little Dot. Well, I'm now doing a specialty with the Musical Maiden Company. We will be at the Ponce de Leon Theater all next week. I would like to see you again. Can't you come up to the show Monday night? If you do, wear a white carnation in your buttonhole so that I can pick you out easily in the crowd.

Affectionately,

Dot.

"That's the why of the alabaster carnation," explained the Humming Bird triumphantly. "At least, they'll all be sugar-coated, so far as your end of the box-office receipts will be concerned. I have a dame over here at the hotel writin' them letters off in a real lady's hand. You know that old-fashioned crisscross stuff that looks like a rail fence? I'm going to mail five hundred of 'em, an' I aint left nobody out. Started with the Mayor an' Council, an' wound up with James Cleveland Trooper, the young feller from the West, who didn't have enough to flag a bread-wagon two months ago, an' woke up one morning to find that his rich old uncle had died an' left him umpty millions. Say, you can't pick up a paper without readin' where that lucky Turk is goin' to marry a duchess—huh! I guess I'm crazy like a pet coon—they wont *all* fall for that come-on stuff, of course; but, believe me, there'll be enough of 'em in the reserves to give us a send-off. Then I'll tip the story to some of the pencil-pushers, an' the advertisin' we'll get oughter wake 'em up for the rest of the week."

"I don't like to use Dot Davenport's name that way, Bird," objected the manager seriously. "She's a mighty nice little girl, an' as good as a new-milled dollar. It's the very last thing she'd do—a girl's name is about all she's got. It don't look like as if we was trottin' fair with her."

"Leave it to me, Barney, leave it to me," rejoined the Humming Bird impressively. "Leave it all to me. I'll square it, an' there wont be no post mortem. What do you care, anyway, when you wont have nothin' harder to do than to count the coin an' stow it away in moth-balls?"

JAMES CLEVELAND TROSPER, late citizen of the world at large, sat in the inner room of a palatial suite of offices and idly sorted the morning's mail while an attentive secretary

waited to execute his commands. A scant two months had elapsed since the former had fallen heir to a rich uncle's wealth, and for the first time in his life he knew what it meant to worry not about material necessities.

Trosper looked out the window at the leafless trees surrounding the public square. His thought carried him back to the good old days when he had changed seasons and localities with the birds, and mentally he debated if after all the new dispensation was better than the old.

The acquisition of great wealth had brought with it a load of new onerous obligations, both in the business and social world. From early boyhood Trosper had been an irresponsible soldier of fortune. His parents had died before he was out of his teens. In turn cowpuncher, bronco-buster with a Wild West show, actor in a small-town stock, circus agent and general all-around wanderer, he had the natural aversion to mingling with people of settled life. And now he was beginning to sense the ever-evident fact that great riches frequently hold many decided drawbacks to complete an unadulterated happiness.

He opened each letter with a certain apathy until he came to a pink-scented affair, the seal of which he broke with the interest of one who expects novel entertainment. He had been the daily recipient of many such epistles since his sudden acquisition of a limitless bank-account. Trosper read the missive, threw back his broad shoulders and laughed with boyish appreciation.

"This is a new one," he soliloquized, half aloud. "I'll bet it's a press-agent stunt. But I'll fall for it once, and it might unearth something that sounds like a real adventure."

"Anything wrong, Mr. Trosper?" hazarded the secretary solicitously.

"Nothing at all! Absolutely nothing!" rejoined the capitalist. "It's a deal you wouldn't understand. Say, Hanley, were you ever in the show-business?"

The little secretary lifted both hands in pious renunciation. "My gracious, no, Mr. Trosper!" he exclaimed in horrified tones.

"Well, well, don't strangle over it," responded his chief affably. "I didn't know, of course. Now you can take a holiday, but along about evening I want you to go to the florist and bring over a couple or three carnations. Put them in water and leave them here in my office."

Hanley bowed acquiescence, without exhibiting any manifestation of surprise. "Of course you know there are several colors in carnations," he suggested diffidently. "What kind shall I bring?"

Trosper referred again to the pink-tinted note. "Make them

all white," he responded. "White is a good color, and complimentary to most any kind of a little adventure. Am I right?"

The secretary lifted his eyebrows just a trifle and coughed behind a deferential hand. This new master of his, with his breezy Western ways, was almost incomprehensible, not to say impossible.

"You are—er—ahem—invariably right, Mr. Trosper," he attested as he gathered up his papers and prepared to depart, while the man in the chair followed his retreating form with an amused smile.

"THE house downstairs looks like a bloomin' bed of roses —I mean carnations," chortled the Humming Bird as he rushed breathlessly into the theater office and addressed his principal. "The flower-store across the way had to send out a hurry call for a fresh supply, an' they're sellin' for fifty a throw like hot-dogs at a tent-show. The gang inside has fell for the frame-up, an' every *hombre* what breaks in with one of them exotics stuck in his front is gettin' a royal reception. Two reporters has been here already, an' they're goin' to make a front-page story out of it in the mornin'. They claim it's the funniest press-stunt that has ever been pulled in this burg. Why, there's guys out there that wouldn't have come for a million dollars if they'd knowed how I set that old bear-trap. But now they have to join in the general round of hilarity to square themselves."

"Fine business! Good work, Bird! That's the way to handle yourself around this show," vouchsafed Moriarty. "Just keep on, an' some day I'll see you standin' in front of a show-shop on Broadway biddin' the time of day to the New York Stock Exchange."

James Cleveland Trosper was the latest patron to arrive. He took a seat in the back row nearest the door, and his advent passed unnoticed. With the self-appreciation of one who has diagnosed a certain situation early in the game, he noted that all the orchestra chairs and a goodly portion of the boxes were occupied by men who wore white carnations in their buttonholes. As the curtain went up for the first part of the performance, those on the stage could with difficulty make themselves heard—the white-carnation brigade were too busy exchanging vociferous pleasantries. Fat men, thin men, bald-headed brothers, and citizens who but for the friendly aid of toupee might have been classed in the latter category, were forging alibis through the medium of doubtful witticisms and slapstick repartee.

This continued until the star made her appearance.

From the first it was obvious that she was totally unaware of the reception in store for her. She was a slender girl, with big dreamy eyes, and as she came gracefully forward, the house rose as a man to greet her.

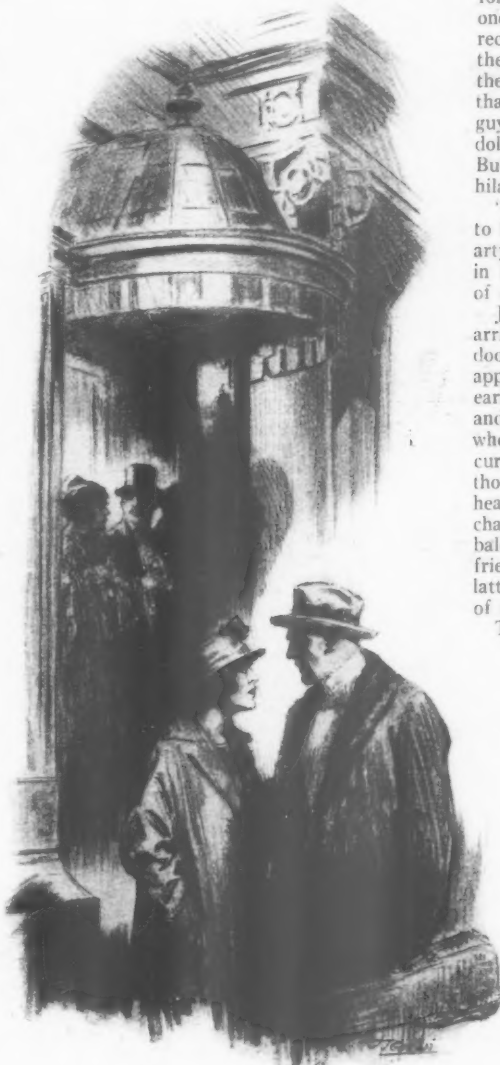
"We're all here, Dot," thundered stentorian throats. "That was some letter, Dot." "Why, sure we remember you." "We brought all the white carnations in town, Dot." These and other similar evidences of bantering approval were directed to the innocent heroine of the occasion. Then a shower of fragrant buds swept over the footlights and fell at her feet.

Every movement and gesture showed that she was at a loss to account for the unexpected reception. Halfway to the center she paused, hesitated momentarily, then turning, fled hastily to the shelter of the wings. When she reappeared, she was led down front by the house-manager, who lifted his hand for silence.

"It's only fair to explain, gentlemen," began Donovan, "that Miss Davenport never knew anything about those notes. I guess by this time you all realize that it was simply a press-agent

stunt, and I think we have all enjoyed ourselves to the limit. Now if you'll give the young lady a hearing, I have no doubt that your courtesy will be rewarded."

As the house subsided to normal, the girl came timidly forward to the full flare of the spotlight, and Trosper for the first time had an opportunity of scanning her features. As he did so, he sat bolt upright, his eyes following her every movement with the dazed look of one who doubts the register of his own senses, until she had made her last bow and retired.



"Let's go to some quiet place," she protested.
"I'm not dressed for this gilded palace thing."

Then the richest young man in Bowville shook himself together, stole quietly out of the theater and took up a position in the back alley commanding a view of the stage entrance. In a few moments the door swung open and the lithe form of the little musician passed into the darkness beyond. Trosper started to meet her, but before he got within speaking distance, the girl, evidently fearing that she was about to encounter one of the roistering patrons of the theater, drew back in alarm and started to retrace her steps. Before she turned about, however, the man came forward and stood out in the light.

"Jimmy!" she exclaimed with a big sigh of relief, mingled with glad surprise as she extended both hands. "Jimmy Trosper! Why, in the name of everything, what brings you here?"

"Why should that earthquake you, Dot?" returned the young man, laughingly. "Haven't I been a pilgrim all my life? There's no law against camping in Bowville, is there?"

"But it's so unexpected, Jimmy," protested the girl. "I haven't seen you for nearly two years now—not since we were both out on the coast, and then you said something about going to South America."

"Never mind me. Tell me all about yourself, Dot," interrupted Trosper. "How did you come to be here, and what in the world prevailed upon you to join out with this cheap little road-show? I tried ever so often, but I couldn't get any trail of you."

"Needs must, you know, Jimmy," responded the girl with sudden gravity. "Aunt Martha died last year, and I had to make the best of what little was left. I had nothing but my musical education to fall back on, and thought New York offered opportunities for talents such as I possessed. It's the same old story, Jimmy; I discovered, when I could least afford to, that musicians grew in every garret in the big town. Just about the time my resources were completely exhausted, I was offered this engagement. It is, as you say, a cheap road-show, but the people themselves are simple and kind-hearted. I might have done worse, Jimmy, in more consequential company."

Trosper linked his arm in that of the girl and led the way down the main street. At the intersection of the principal thoroughfare and the Avenue, he paused and made as if to turn into the ornate entrance leading to the café of the city's most expensive hostelry.

The little musician drew back in alarm. "Let's go to some quiet place, Jimmy," she protested in an agitated whisper. "I'm not dressed for this gilded palace thing, and besides, it's so expensive. Money and you fell out the day you were born, Jimmy."

"Dressed, nothing," responded her escort with reckless abandon. "Why, the doggone place isn't half good enough for this little reunion. Say, Dot, if you don't follow me, I'll put blinkers on you and back you in. And the expense? Shucks! What's the odds! It's only for one evening, anyway. Why, little girl, where's all your old courage, and what do we care? They can't arrest us, anyway, can they?"

But still the girl hung back. "No, Jimmy," she reiterated decisively, "these places with their glare and glitter and make-believe stifle me, anyway. Besides, you mustn't throw away what little money you have, on me. Let's take a long walk up the Avenue. I don't believe there is any appeal to either of us in the life that's inside there. In the old days it was always the open road, wasn't it, Jimmy?"

"Well, all right," he agreed with a half-sigh of relief. "To tell you the truth, Dot, I've always hated these places myself. And anyway, we have so much to talk about—of the trails we've traveled, and the good times we had together back in God's country. Ever since I camped here I've felt like a lost dog. So it will be a long walk and a longer talk. Right-o! Dot, let's go."

"EVERY time I look at one of you guys, I feel like singin' 'Wait Till the Clouds Roll by,'" hummed the Bird as he entered the office where Donovan and Moriarty sat on the morning after the carnation episode. "Well, well! Can't neither of you give it a name? An' the house sold out last night, not to mention the fair flowers of fancy which brought the coin to the box office!"

Both men turned and regarded the newcomer gravely. Consternation was written all over Moriarty's expressive countenance. His lips moved, but he uttered no sound. The Humming Bird's puzzled gaze shifted to Donovan, but the latter simply glared indignation. Then as if to answer the former's amazed glances, and to end further argument, he silently passed over the letter which he held in his hand.

The Humming Bird's face blanched, and his jaw dropped as he read the following:

My dear Mr. Moriarty:

At this particular time I regret to bear ill tidings to anyone. But I must tell you I met an old and dear friend after the performance last night. We had not seen each other for a long time, and strange to say he received one of the notes about coming to the show and wearing a white carnation. We were married this morning, so of course you will realize it is necessary for me to tender my resignation.

I will never forget how kind you all were to me, and trust that my absence will not work any hardship. We leave on a short honeymoon trip this evening, but I will call to see you all before I go. With good wishes and love to everybody.

Yours sincere friend,

Dot.

As the Humming Bird finished reading, Moriarty found his voice.

"You want me to tell you somethin', do you?" he snorted. "You want me to give it a name, huh? Why, you blamed idiot, there aint a monaker in the city directory that'd fit it. You wouldn't be more dangerous if you was a ton of dynamite. There aint nothin' happened to us, exceptin' that we was blowed up; that's all. Aint that enough?"

"How'd I know there was a kick in it," whined the Humming Bird. "Honest, Barney, do you suppose I'd—"

"I don't suppose anything," retorted the other, savagely. "There's no suppose about it. Here, wait a minute. Some one's knockin'; better open up and see what it is—more tearful tidin's, I reckon."

AS the door swung back, a tall, genial-faced man was standing on the threshold.

"I hope I'm not intruding," he began apologetically, "—or that this meeting is not private."

"You aint intrudin' ay-tall," emphasized Moriarty. "Come right in an' make yourself to home, stranger. This aint no pussy-foot game; it's open to the world. Whenever I got anythin' to say to a guy which has made a solid basswood play, I don't care who hears it. Take a seat. I'll tend to your case directly."

"Now," resumed Moriarty, turning again towards the Humming Bird and lifting an accusing finger. "Now, all I want to say is that you aint got sense enough to lead a horse to water. You thought you was fram'in' for a bunch of farmers, and you framed me instead. Where are we now? Tell me that if you can. Little Dot was the only one with the show that could make good, and all you did was to invent a fool scheme so's as we up an' lose her. Say, Bird, personally, I like you—like you because you're such a blamed innocent faker an' you aint wised up to yourself. An' Dot, above all! How do we know that she aint gone an' hooked up with some guy which thought he was gettin' a meal ticket? There's a girl what had a future an' was worth a good man's time. Why—"

But at this juncture Moriarty stopped abruptly, because the tall stranger had taken the center of the floor and was speaking.

"You've dealt me a hand," he said quietly; "I've got all the cards, and if you'll excuse me, it's my play." He paused as Moriarty turned to regard him. "I'm the man who married Dot," he concluded simply.

"What might the name be?" interrogated the Humming Bird, breaking in with a weak imitation of his old bravado. "To whom are we indebted for this little joy-festival? And why the surprise party? I know'd some small-town guy would grab that girl before snow flew, and I aint no prophet, neither."

"My name," said the stranger diffidently, "is James Cleveland Trosper. Do I flatter myself if I suggest that you have heard it before?"

The Humming Bird staggered back until his lank personality dropped against the office desk. "You, James C. Trosper!" he stammered weakly. "You—you—lucky Trosper, huh? The guy what sailed from the sagebrush to sortin' his savings with a scoop-shovel? Here is where I take the count. Gimme plenty of air, an' caution 'em to handle me gentle when the ambulance drives up."

The tall intruder smiled genially. "Never mind, Bird," he retorted merrily. "Up to date everything is stowed away where it belongs. You see, Dot and I knew each other in the old days back West, and if I hadn't gotten that fool note of yours, I would never have rounded her up."

"You drew one capital prize, lemme tell you that, Mister," broke in Moriarty heartily. "And even (*Continued on page 146*)

Cousin May

By

James K. Hanna

A remarkable episode in the career of wealthy Roger Murchison, who hired some professional grafters to amuse him. They did so.

ON the morning of the sixth of August, Roger Murchison took his seat at the breakfast-table and drew the pile of mail toward him, while Miggs, his faithful butler, prepared two slices of toast on the electric grill on the sideboard. This Roger Murchison was not at all the same Roger Murchison that had breakfasted at the same table a few months before. It is true that he still wore the shabby brown dressing-gown and floppy slippers; but he was now a brisk, cheerful man—a man interested in life and not afraid of the night. For several weeks Roger Murchison had been sleeping soundly. His eyes were bright, and many of the lines of care had been eliminated from his face by the increasing fullness that told of a good appetite.

"Miggs," he said cheerfully to his butler, "do you think this establishment could manage a slice of nicely browned ham this morning?"

The old butler's face glowed with delight as he turned toward his master.

"I am quite sure it can, Mr. Roger," he said; "and if I may venture to say so, it gives me great pleasure to have you ask for it."

"Thank you, Miggs," said Murchison. "I do feel like a boy again. My Graft Syndicate has been a success, has it not, Miggs?"

"I am obliged to admit that it has, sir," said Miggs. "You sleep well every night, now, sir, I am glad to say."

"And you did not think much of the idea, did you?" said Roger Murchison a bit teasingly.

"I must confess I did not, sir," said Miggs, turning the toast; "and I am not calm in my mind about the business, even now, Mr. Roger, if I may make so bold."

"You mean you fear my three grafters may lead me into trouble I do not expect?" said Mr. Murchison.

"I believe that is what I mean, sir," said Miggs respectfully. "The present association with persons of the criminal classes may not be easy to bring to an end. If you will permit me to say so, Mr. Roger, I very much dislike the idea of giving those persons more room in this house."

Roger Murchison smiled, but the smile was not entirely confident. There was much sense in what Miggs said. Not long before this, Roger Murchison had been a sufferer from insomnia in its worst form; he could sleep neither by day or by night, and felt himself doomed to madness or a suicide's fate because he could not withdraw his mind from its endless contemplation



Illustrated by
Ray Rohn

of the mystery of the Markham Vase—known as the Vase of Apollo of Corinth. This, the ancient ritual vase of the Temple of Apollo of Corinth, pictured twenty-two of the twenty-four dancing figures, each typifying one of the twenty-four rites of the worship of the Corinthian Apollo; but a missing portion of the vase left two of the figures to conjecture, and it was by trying to imagine these two figures that Roger Murchison had brought himself to sleeplessness verging on madness, for he was a student of such subjects and an authority comparable only with Gerking of Berlin and Pinzucci of Florence.

The days, when he was busy with his investigations in his study, had not been so awful; but the sleepless nights of vain thinking were beyond bearing, and it was in his desire to drive away the thought of the vase by putting into his mind some other problem that Roger Murchison conceived the idea of hiring three persons to attempt to bunco him, hoping that by trying to prevent their success he would give his mind the new problem it needed.

Choosing quite at random three persons from the many who wrote him begging letters, Mr. Murchison—a bachelor—had contracted with them to try to get money from him by any fraudulent means. At first Rosa Lind—who posed as a queen of graft, Red-line Rose, but who was only a stenographer who had failed as a stage dancer—and her two partners, Mr. Skink and Mr. Tubbel, had been but poorly successful; but they had recently contrived to bunco Mr. Murchison out of fifty thousand, and then one hundred thousand dollars; and as he had agreed to double any amount they won, his loss was a full three hundred thousand—a nice sum, but trifling to a man with over twenty-five millions, since he was now sleeping well and all danger of madness and death seemed gone.

The effect of their two successes on Rosa Lind and her confederates, Mr. Skink and Mr. Tubbel, had been noteworthy. While Mr. Skink and Mr. Tubbel had been eager to throw up their extraordinary task, they were now eager to continue. In Rosa Lind the difference was even more marked. While Roger Murchison had fallen deeply in love with her and she had come to admire him sincerely, her graft successes had made her eager to do still greater things in the bunco line.

It was in this eager spirit that Rosa Lind had asked Roger Murchison to set aside for her use two additional rooms on the second floor of his Fifth Avenue house, where she already had one to use as headquarters for the Graft Syndicate, and it was this request for more rooms that disturbed Miggs more than aught else. Her plea granted, Rosa Lind had promptly fitted the two additional rooms with office furniture, and on the doors of the three rooms, in gilt letters, appeared the legends, "Miss Lind," "Mr. Skink" and "Mr. Tubbel." Not only had this been done, but each day there now assembled in the three rooms enough persons to constitute the force of a good-sized business organization—some twenty in all. The extent of Rosa Lind's intended operations against Mr. Murchison's bank account might have been indicated by the fact that eight typewriting machines were clicking continuously, while each room had its own telephone.

When Roger Murchison had viewed these preparations, he had felt a glow of pleasure such as a chess wizard feels when he sees the boards set for the match in which he is to pit his skill against the combined skill of a dozen expert opponents.

Murchison opened his mail while Miggs busied himself with the preparation of the eggs and ham. A few ordinary begging

letters Murchison put to one side. The next letter held his attention. It purported to be from his uncle in California, saying that Roger's cousin, a girl of twenty, was coming to New York, and asking whether it would be convenient for her to stop at the Murchison home during her stay. If not, Roger's uncle suggested, Cousin May would probably stop with Roger's aunt Ann Warker.

"Cousin May!" said Murchison to himself, and smiled. "My dear cousin May is probably one of the strings of my grafters' bow."

The next letter bore an Italian postmark and stamp, and seemed to be in the hand of Professor Pinzucci of Florence, and dealt with the Markham Vase. The site of the Temple of Apollo at Corinth had been located, and it was desired to form a company or secure a fund to excavate on the site on a chance that the bit of shard showing the two missing dancing figures might be found. As the war had left Professor Gerking of Berlin penniless, Professor Pinzucci was appealing to Mr. Murchison. Between fifty and one hundred thousand dollars would suffice.

"Do I see the hand of my grafters in this?" queried Murchison, and he put the letter atop that of his uncle.

One by one, as Murchison opened the letters, he placed them on the same pile. Each and every epistle might be the opening wedge for the next bunco operation planned

by Rosa Lind, and yet none might be. Roger Murchison gathered the letters into two great bundles and crowded them into the two pockets of his dressing-gown for later and mature study. The game was growing interesting, for each day brought its score of events and epistles. He attacked his ham and eggs with enthusiasm. . . .

The telegram announcing the departure from Pasadena of Roger Murchison's cousin May was of the sort known as a night letter and was handed to Mr. Murchison at breakfast some few days later. The envelope containing it had been placed by Miggs on top of the morning's pile of mail and was the first thing opened by Roger Murchison.

"My cousin May will arrive five days from today, Miggs," Roger said. "She will stop here. I have asked Aunt Ann to be with us during my charming cousin's visit. I say 'charming,' Miggs, because I

have it on the best authority that she is indeed charming."

"I am sure she must be so, sir," said Miggs.

"Charming, but I do not know what else," said Roger, "for this, I believe, Miggs, is the day of the vamp, as I have gathered from the papers. I do not mean to be vamped, Miggs."

"And quite a proper reluctance, sir," said Miggs. "I have feared that the young lady might be in conspiracy with your grafters, sir, if she is indeed your cousin."



Roger Murchison drew a deep breath. "That's odd," he said somewhat foolishly. "—that's very odd! That never happened to me before."



"My own letter," said Murchison. "I suppose you needed this young army of men to carry the money."

"On one point I have protected myself," said Roger. "I have had telegrams from eight entirely dependable ladies of Pasadena assuring me that my cousin May does indeed mean to come to New York, describing her most minutely, and promising to wire me of her departure from Pasadena. Do I hear the bell, Miggs?"

While Miggs hurried to the street door, Mr. Murchison opened more of his mail. A letter from the United States consul at Florence assured him that Professor Pinzucci had not written the letter regarding the proposed excavations for the shard of the Markham Vase, and that it must have been the work of forgers. Of the remaining letters, a half-dozen might well be opening wedges for new bunco operations, and a half-dozen others were from lawyers, financial concerns and others telling Roger Murchison that letters previously received must have been the work of frauds or criminals.

Murchison chuckled. He felt mentally alert and capable of checking any move made by Rosa Lind.

When Miggs returned, he bore eight telegrams. All were of the same tenor, announcing that May Wiltson had left Pasadena en route for New York.

ON the fourth day following the receipt of the wires saying Miss Wiltson was on her way East, Mr. Murchison, at breakfast, gave Miggs his final instructions regarding the arrangements to be made for her entertainment.

"Miggs," said Mr. Murchison, as he paused half way in the consumption of the generous slice of ham in which he had been indulging of late, "this ham seems to have a peculiar taste."

"Indeed, sir?" replied Miggs. "I had a bit of it myself this morning and it seemed quite proper, sir."

Murchison laughed.

"I'm getting just a little too suspicious, perhaps, Miggs," he said. "I look for the work of my Graft Syndicate even in ham and eggs."

"Yes sir," said Miggs. "No doubt but what you have cause to be on your guard, sir."

As usual Mr. Murchison carried his mail to his study to assort and consider at leisure when he had finished his breakfast. Hardly had he entered the room, which adjoined the one used as an office by Rosa Lind, than there came a tapping on the door. When he gave permission, the door opened, and Rosa Lind entered, accompanied by the tall, thin Mr. Skink and the preposterously short and fat Mr. Tubbel.

"Ah, Miss Lind!" Roger exclaimed. "Nothing wrong, I hope."

Rosa Lind sank into the chair opposite Mr. Murchison, leaving Mr. Skink and Mr. Tubbel to find seats or not, as they chose. As he looked into her face, Roger Murchison felt with renewed delight the beauty of her eyes.

"Nothing wrong," said Rosa Lind, smiling slightly. "It is only that I have heard through your housekeeper that a young lady—your niece—"

"My cousin, not my niece," said Murchison.

"Your cousin? —That your cousin, then, is coming here," said Rosa Lind. "I can well see that the presence in your house of myself and the many people I have found necessary in my work might be—"

"And I say," Mr. Skink broke in, "that an agreement is an agreement. You offered us these rooms—"

"And we've a right to them," puffed Mr. Tubbel. "I say that to make a man move out of his private office just because a niece or a cousin is—"

"Be still, Tubby," said Miss Lind. "You will let me do the talking, if you please. I have come to offer, Mr. Murchison, to transfer the headquarters of the Graft Syndicate elsewhere temporarily if you so desire."

"That is kind, Miss Lind, very kind," said Roger with feeling, but with just a suspicion that something might be hidden beneath her offer. "If you will let me consider the matter for one moment—"

He felt a bit drowsy and rising to stir his faculties, walked over to the window. His eyes idly rested, then, on the façade—in the monotonously prevalent brownstone of the older New York—of the home of his opposite neighbor. There must be, he argued, some trick in this offer of Rosa Lind's. What it might be he could not at the moment fathom; but trick it must be, unless, indeed, Rosa Lind did indeed care for him and what might be thought of him. He turned from the window. She was looking up at him, smiling, and Mr. Skink was just dropping into a chair, while Mr. Tubbel had taken from his pocket a match to light a cigarette he had already placed in his mouth.

"I think—" said Roger Murchison. But at that moment the cloud of drowsiness which had been gathering seemed entirely to envelope him. He put his hand to his eyes and gasped, but the next moment all seemed clear again. Something seemed to have happened, however—which was really not at all strange, for as a matter of fact several days had happened, and various interesting events. He came to his senses however, lying on the floor as if he had merely suffered a momentary faint; and as he opened his eyes, Rosa Lind and Mr. Skink sprang from their chairs; and Mr. Tubbel puffed and panted toward him. Even before he could scramble to his feet, the three had grasped him by the arms and were helping him to his chair.

"A glass of water, Skink," said Rosa Lind sharply; Mr. Skink went out of the study, and before she could say more, Roger Murchison drew a deep breath.

"That's odd," he said, somewhat foolishly. "—that's very odd! That never happened to me before. Things went black; I fell, didn't I?"

"But how do you feel? Are you all right now?" Rosa Lind asked.

"Quite all right," he said.

"Had we not better send for a doctor?"

"No, I'm quite myself again. Thank you, Skink; this water will quite restore me. And now, as I was saying a moment ago, I think there is no necessity for you to move your headquarters from this house. I prefer that you should stay here. If my cousin shows any interest whatever, I may tell her you people are a staff I have gathered in connection with my investigation of the ancient Greek vases—which," he added smilingly, "is more or less the truth."

"Thank you, Mr. Murchison," said Rosa Lind. "But if you think best to change your mind, we will go at any time." And with Mr. Skink and Mr. Tubbel, she left the study.

MURCHISON, left alone, sat in silence some minutes, trying to test any inward sensations he might be feeling, but he felt none except a rather pleasant lassitude and an unaccountable hunger. He put out his hand for his pile of letters and yawned luxuriously as he took the first letter from the pile. With it open, he stared at it lazily. He was too delightfully weary to read it. He arose and walked to the window, looking out upon the Avenue until he wearied of that sight. As he returned to his table, he let his eyes rest upon his priceless collection of Greek vases, the vast number of which filled the cabinets that lined the walls. A vase with a Hebe filling a cup depicted on it reminded him again of his hunger, and he pressed the button that summoned Miggs.

"Miggs," he said, "I am hungry."

The old butler bowed.

"Yes, Mr. Roger," he said, quite as if his master habitually became hungry immediately after breakfast.

"Miggs," said Murchison, "I feel as if I had not eaten for a week."

Miggs seemed to hesitate.

"But you have, sir," he said with what seemed unnecessary

earnestness. "Not as heartily as usual, perhaps, sir, but sufficient, if I may say so, amply to sustain life."

With these remarkable words he went about his business, which was to get Roger Murchison something to eat.

WHEN Miggs had removed the tray, after his master had emptied the coffee-cup and the dishes, Murchison went through his letters, making notations on some and tossing others into his wastebasket, and answering some in his customary long-hand, and then strolled to the window looking down at the Avenue, as he loved to do when perplexed.

As he looked, an automobile—a limousine of value—stopped before the brownstone mansion opposite, and to Roger Murchison's unbounded surprise, Mr. Skink and Mr. Tubbel emerged from the car, closely followed by a young woman deeply veiled. Mr. Skink and Mr. Tubbel seemed to be aiding her with chivalrous care, but Mr. Murchison, from his window, could see that they grasped her arms with all the strength of the fingers, and they hurried her up the steps of the stoop of the house opposite. The door opened to receive them, and the house opposite swallowed all three. In the moment before the door closed, Mr. Murchison saw Mr. Skink cast a quick glance to the window, but Murchison had hidden himself behind the curtain and felt sure he had not been seen.

"So that is it!" he said grimly, for the size and general proportions of the young female prisoner were the same he had been advised were those of May Wiltson, his California cousin. "So that is it! No wonder Rosa Lind was willing to make offers of removal. My chief of grafters is a gentle jester! And I suppose," he added to himself, "this will be a case of ransom. Clever indeed! They well imagine I would not care to have Cousin May's father know his daughter was stolen from under my eyes. But—"

He stopped short and put his hand to his forehead.

"But she is not due till tomorrow!" he cried with a sudden sensation of all the world going wrong. "This must be some trick or—"

Gazing through his curtains at the house opposite, a detail that he had not grasped before now caught his eye, and he bent forward, hardly breathing. The number over the door of the brownstone mansion opposite was not the number of the house of the neighbor across the street from his own mansion!

The number, if it had not been tampered with, was that of a house some blocks farther north on the Avenue! Murchison turned and surveyed the room in which he stood. It seemed, in every detail, his own study in his own house, with every precious vase in the place it had always been.

He went to the door and threw it open. This was not his house! The long hall, which in his own house was softly carpeted, was bare except for a strip of cheap matting. Murchison turned to the room that had been Rosa Lind's office. No name was on the door; and when he opened the door, the room was empty, but for the dust and rubbish that usually are the mark of long-vacated rooms.

Murchison walked down the stairs to the lower floor. Instead of the somewhat old but elegant furnishings of his own home, nothing but bareness met his eyes, except that at the street door was one cheap wooden chair, and on this sat the man he had known in one of the Graft Syndicate's earlier operations as Dan Fogarty.

Dan Fogarty looked up as Murchison approached him. In his hand Dan Fogarty held a wicked club made from a billiard cue. He moved this slightly as Murchison approached him, getting a better grip on it, and Murchison saw that the portion used as a handle had been wrapped with tire-tape. Nothing gives a safer gripping surface.

"Morning," said Fogarty briefly. "It's all right," he added as Murchison glanced at the club. "You have the run of the house, upstairs or downstairs, but keep away from doors and windows down below here. Back door is watched. Forman is there."

"Where is Miggs?" asked Murchison.

"Miggs? Him you ring the bell for? He's in the pantry, I take it."

"Thank you. I'm a prisoner here, I suppose?"

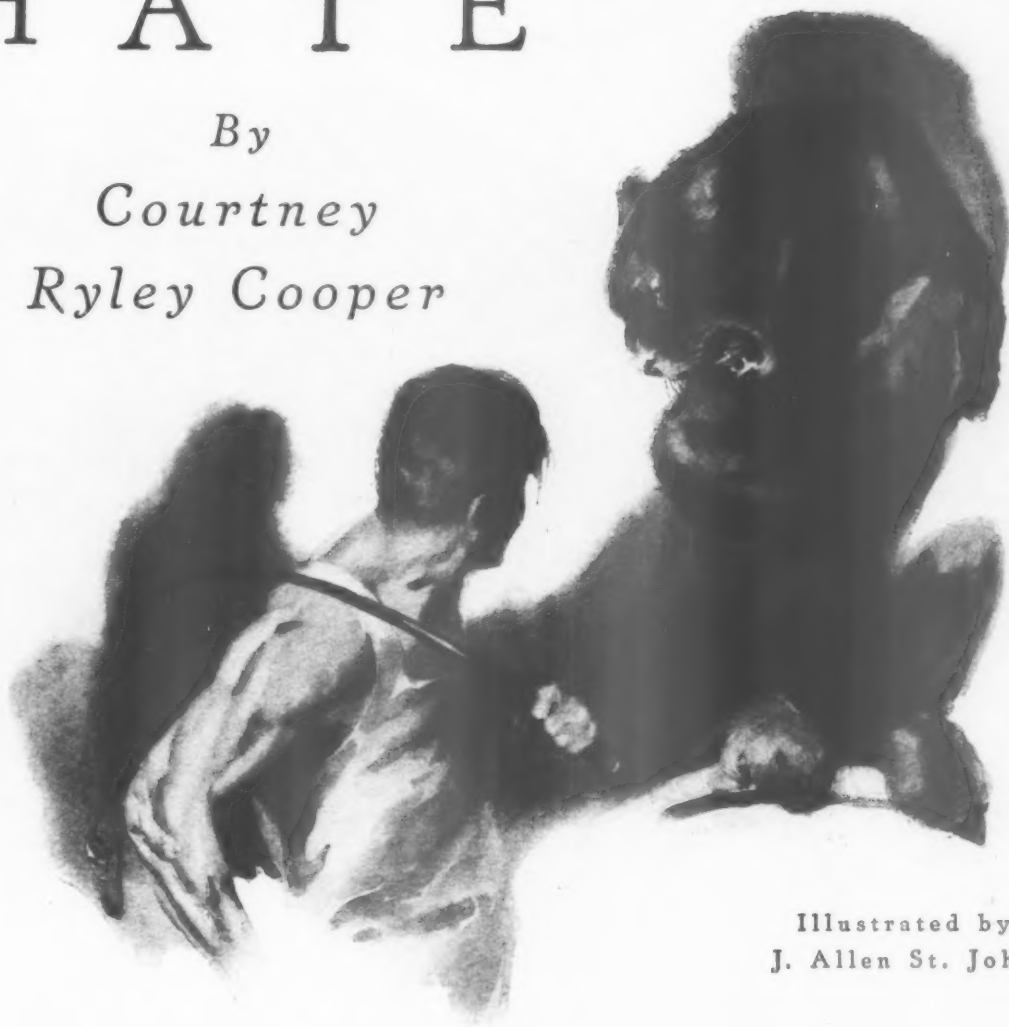
"Looks like it," said Fogarty.

Murchison turned and went toward the pantry. As he neared it, he heard Miggs moving about, and the clink of spoons and metal ware. Evidently Miggs was engaged in preparing the next meal.

"Always faithful, always dependable," (Continued on page 132)

H A T E

By
*Courtney
Ryley Cooper*



Illustrated by
J. Allen St. John

THE eyes of Black Midnight were yellow, a gleaming, malicious yellow, marked in sharp division by pupils of glaring black—eyes which seemed to exude malevolence as an acid-caldron exudes its noxious gas.

Above his half of the heavily barred, partitioned den which had formed his prison during five years of captivity, was a gold-leafed panel which declared him to be a "tapir-tiger." The rest was left to the observer's imagination. The circus men, however, more familiar with the feline beasts of Africa and Asia than with those of the nearer jungles of the Amazon and Orinoco country, called him a black leopard and let it go at that. They did not clean his cage or provide his food as they did in the case of the other animals. They did not watch over him or train him or care for him. It interested them not at all that he was a black jaguar from the humid, water-soaked swamps of Guiana, or that, of all the beasts of South American catdom, he was the most intractable, the most resentful, the most venomous and the most spiteful. To them, he was a thing apart, a black demon of viciousness, held in subjection by one being, and one alone, Lascaigne, his trainer and his comrade. Even Hate can know the companionship of kind.

Lascaigne beat him regularly. And from Lascaigne the beast accepted the welt-raising blows with little more than a writhing, hissing resentment. Lascaigne had captured him in the breaks of the rotten, foul-smelling swamp-country of Guiana, where he had lived as the black jaguar lives, his place of ambush the projecting limbs of half-submerged trees, his life one of constant assault and successive victory. Only the giant ant-eater, making a last, frenzied plunge with his saber-like claws, or the puma of the plains, screeching his wrath as he streaks to the attack, are fit antagonists of the black jaguar in the haunts that he calls his own. None other is by him feared or hated. The boa-constrictor writhes aimlessly in the clutch of his claws; the tapir forms his daily food; the frightened bellowing of milling, fear-maddened cattle accompanies his every creeping approach; even the great *cayman*, or tropical alligator, is but a lashing, convulsive victim, once his poisonous claws sink home and the heavy, crunching jaws close at the point of vulnerability. Such was Midnight—and his human counterpart was Jules Lascaigne. It was as if each brute had recognized another and found in each a common ground of fellowship. Both, in their day, had killed—each to his disadvantage. Because of the spasmodic blow of a dying ant-

eater, Midnight, ripped, torn and bleeding, had staggered into the trap which had led ultimately to his present cage in the Grand Amalgamated's menagerie. Because of a black rage of jealousy which had sent a bullet into the brain of a woman, Jules Lascaigne first had spent his savings, then mortgaged and finally lost his circus, all that he might gain freedom, only to find himself captive again, in the necessity of earning a livelihood. More, Jules Lascaigne had been forced to accept life from the hands of a man he once had rivaled, a man whom he had come to hate more and more as the days of his servitude passed—John Anderson. Nor did the fact that John Anderson, late owner of the Grand Amalgamated, had lain in his grave for three weeks, quench the hate that smoldered in the heart of the black-eyed, black-browed animal-trainer. For he just had intercepted a telegram.

In the cage the jaguar, after one yowl in answer to the greeting of his

trainer's glance; he clutched at the bars with a grip which told of surging emotions.

"Eh!" he jeered. "You try to know what is beyond the gate? You are afraid, yes? S-h-h-h-h!" He leaned closer and whispered, as though in warning: "It is the thing that can kill you—the puma!"

Black Midnight stared, and then, as if in answer, turned restlessly once more to the partition, and resumed his sniffing. Lascaigne watched for a moment, his eyes drawn together, his



owner, returned to the attitude he had occupied for hours—a tense, crouching posture at the heavy boards of the sliding partition which divided, transversely, the cage he occupied. The night before, the scent of an enemy had come from beyond that partition and had been instinctively catalogued as such by the ebony brute. All night he had crouched there, his memory struggling to correlate an elusive something into a reality. Five years is a long span in the memory-life of an animal; so now, the while the jaguar's instinct sensed a hated thing, his brain could not define it.

With the exception of one glaring-eyed creature of stripes and hissing jaws which paced its cage in short, jerky, yet stealthy steps across the way, they were alone in the menagerie, Lascaigne, the jaguar and the new beast which occupied the other half of the black brute's den. The rest of the animals were trailing the sunlit stretch of the morning parade, grateful for the chance to pace and tumble in the brightness of uncanvassed daylight. It was always so in the morning with the Grand Amalgamated; out of consideration for a fallen rival, John Anderson had relieved Lascaigne of the necessity of "making parade," leaving him, instead, to watch after his own beast and the crazy, glaring Bengal tiger across the way, a tremendous, hulking thing whose murderous tendencies long ago had prohibited any element of chance which might lead to escape—and the wholesale killings which inevitably would follow. And so each morning parade-time found the menagerie tent the abiding place of three dangerous, treacherous brutes, Sahib the man-eater, who had torn the life from four trainers before he had been condemned at last to solitary confinement; Black Midnight, who screamed and hissed at the approach of every person save one; and Jules Lascaigne. Usually, it was an hour of comparative peace, but this morning—

Slowly, shiftily, Black Midnight turned and fastened his sinister eyes upon the features of his master. The latter, folding the telegram, approached the cage. A latent ferocity was in the

fingers tapping nervously on the bars of the den. Then suddenly he swerved and with a quick motion restored the telegram to its envelope. A young woman was approaching from the marquee at the entrance to the menagerie, and with oily suavity Jules Lascaigne moved forward to greet her, extending the yellow message.

"It is the mistake I have made, Miss Jane," he declared with a short, bobbing bow. "A boy, he come saying he has a telegram for the show. I think it is something that is important, and I open it, without looking at the envelope. Then I see the name of Miss Jane Anderson—and I tuck it back again."

"Thank you, Jules." The girl had taken the message, and was opening it, while the black-browed man stood studying her. But his gaze was not an appraisal of her youth or of the softness of her brown hair, or of the small, pretty mold of her features. It was something else, something which found a reflection only in the glint of his eyes, for a moment strangely like the yellow, bottomless ones of Black Midnight, sniffing and clawing there at the barricade. But in a second it was gone, as the girl looked toward him; again he was bowing and oily and suave.

"It was addressed to me," she said, "but in reality, it's to everyone in the show. It's from Ed Marshall."

"Eh? So?" Within the cage the jaguar turned to stare as the form of Jules Lascaigne came close again. "A telegram from one's sweetheart, eh?"

She colored and laughed.

"But this time it's a strictly business matter, Jules. Just listen to this:

"Petition viewed favorably by court and have been accepted as manager Grand Amalgamated by trustees. Will join soon as possible. Hope puma arrived O. K. It is quite tame and good worker. Think can break it to fill in leopard act, as will continue to work animals for time at least. Best regards to all.—Ed."

Jane Anderson looked up quickly to note the effect upon Lascaigne.

"It is good," he murmured.

"Oh, I'm so glad to hear you say so."

"And is my opinion—" He finished the sentence with a jerky bow.

"It's—it's not that. But—well, you having owned a show once, and all, I—I thought that maybe you'd—maybe you wouldn't understand about Ed. Father always

nearly always! We must think of something else to—to help him!" He smiled cynically. "Why, my friend," he asked, "have you not the strength of crazy Sahib, across the way? Then we could help—oh, so much! One lunge, that would be all. But—you are not Sahib. You are only Midnight."

Jules carefully tested the strength of the partition's grooved fastenings before he proceeded to the work of the morning. And as if in answer to him, the jaguar once more took up its sentry-like position, to sniff and claw and hiss, in its effort to identify that thing beyond the wall. Nor did the roars of Sahib, venting his blood-thirst in crashing charges against the bars of his prison opposite, as the first of the matinée crowds surged along the barriers of rope, swerve him. The band sounded from beyond. A shifting-den appeared, and within its narrow confines the jaguar was carried to the performing arena, there to hiss and claw and to be beaten, then again to crouch at that dividing door when once he had been returned to his den, weak and welted from the blows of his master's bull-whip.



The leopards scurried for their cage. Lascaigne caught the puma in his arms and raced for the door.

wanted him, you know; so when the will was probated, I took it up with the trustees, and—I'm so anxious to have him succeed! I want everybody to help him."

"Good! It shall be done." The hand that gripped the bar of Black Midnight's cage grew whiter with pressure, but Jane Anderson only saw the smile on the man's lips. With a smile and little nod she turned away. A moment later—

The jaguar once more stared at his master. Both the latter's hands were on the bars now, and the black face of the man was close to that of the beast.

"Eh!" he half whispered. "I shall help him—who robs me! It is not enough that I have the brains to be the master. It is not enough that I am Jules Lascaigne, who knows the circus from pad-room to marquee! And ah, my friend,"—a glint of desire came into his eyes.—"we should have seen, you and I, that we did not suffer! There are ways—Jules knows them—Jules knows!" Suddenly he veered and the expression changed. "Eh, Midnight, we shall help him! In the way that we know—just you and I, my friend! Some day the partition door may break, and you may go through to the puma's side—eh? But no!" He spoke it suddenly, as with an afterthought. "I must strengthen that door. A puma can kill a jaguar. Yes—

It was that evening when suddenly the black, ungainly beast leaped about his cage in a sudden frenzy, the eerie "Pu—pu" of his outcries sounding in quick succession—and echoed by a screeching challenge from beyond. Animal memory at last had served. Black Midnight had identified his enemy.

Nor did the fact that beyond the heavy planks an almost certain defeat awaited seem to enter into his calculations. It was hate which formed the propelling power behind his lunges, red hate, the inception of which traveled back to the days of South America, to the animal traditions of the jaguar and the puma, sworn

enemies of the swamp and plain, the morass and the jungle—hate which surged within him in constant compulsion.

All night he roared and cried and scratched and clawed, even after the side-boards had been attached to the den, and the wagon had trailed the torch-lit way to the railroad yards for the journey to the next town. Dawn brought him exhaustion, with resultant sleep—but the brightness of morning only caused a renewal of his frenzy. And as he surged and leaped, the black-browed man came again to his cage, to peer at him a moment, then to watch appraisingly the actions of the more quiet, more composed puma at the other end of the cage.

"Eh!" he exclaimed at last. "You might be able to do it! He is not so large as the usual puma. And he has been tamed. Perhaps—" He paused. "We shall wait, Midnight; we shall wait."

THE next morning Black Midnight, his yellow eyes glaring, turned for a moment from his vigil, hissed in anger at an intruder. A man was standing beside the cage, evidently in wait. A moment more, and he spoke, as a second figure approached.

"Lascaigne!"

"Yes, Mr. Marshall."

"What's the matter with this jaguar?"

"It is the puma on the other side."

"That so?—Jerry!" An animal-man approached. "Any chance to change these cats around—can't we put this puma in some other den, so that—"

"Not now, sir. We'll be able to do it in a week or so, all right, as soon as we get back them dens that was busted up when the two sixes went through that bridge last month. They ought to be waitin' for us at St. Paul. But now"—he scratched his head—"I don't know of no cat that we could switch in there without causing as much of a ruction as is goin' on already."

"All right," Marshall seemed disappointed. "Let it go." Then, as the animal-tender went on, the new manager turned again to the waiting Lascaigne. "By the way, Jules, there's something I've got to talk to you about. I hate to say it, but I don't like your act."

The black-browed eyes narrowed—but that was all.

"I am sorry, Mr. Marshall. I—"

"It isn't that you aren't a good trainer. Don't misunderstand me. But the thing's too brutal. I sat in the audience last night and watched it. I heard a lot of kicks; they don't like to see an animal beaten the way you beat that jaguar."

"Beat him?" Lascaigne spread his hands in sudden remonstrance. "Is it that I must treat him like a house-cat—or that I must pet him with my bare hands? Is it that I must beg him to do his work when he does not want to do it? No! I am Lascaigne!" The ferocity of his temper had supplanted his usual studied calmness. "I know what shall be done with an animal. As long as I shall train animals—just that long shall I beat them!"

"Not on this show, Jules." The announcement was made very quietly. "Jane's against it—Mr. Anderson was against it. We talked that over not a week before he died. He told me then that he intended to see you about it. Circus crowds don't want that sort of thing."

"No?" Jules Lascaigne sneered. "Especially, when there are two animal-trainers on the show—and one of them is the manager, who can make himself as big as he cares to—at the expense of a man who really knows!"

"You know that's not true," was the still quiet reply.

"Then why do you tell me how to work my act? Do I, Jules Lascaigne, give you directions as to what you shall do with your leopards? Do—" Then with one of his sudden swerves, he veered the conversation. "Circus crowds do not like fierceness, eh? Then why do you keep Sahib, the man-eater—Sahib, who has killed his four trainers!"

"He's not being worked now; he's only a menagerie exhibit."

"No, but he is still the man-eater. He still frightens the people when the crowds come in."

"Midnight does the same thing."

"Yes. But he is small—no larger than a leopard. And he is worth something in the arena. Sahib—he could make three of my Midnight. And he is ten times as fierce. But you keep him. You—"

"Only until the end of the week, if that's really a part of the argument, Jules. We've sold him to the Selden shows, and we ship him Saturday. So that ends that. Let's get back to the original discussion. Can't you handle Midnight without beating him half to death at every performance?"

"Lascaigne has been a big name for twenty years as an animal-trainer. And I am Lascaigne. I shall handle my act as I please."

"I'm sorry, Jules. But Jane's against it, and I'm against it. Would two weeks be fair?"

"Two weeks?" The man stared. "You mean—"

"We can't use the act. We'll pay you your two weeks' salary and let you close immediately, or we'll carry you on to any place you say, within those two weeks, without working. But—we don't want the act."

"You fire me, then?" Jules Lascaigne had become very calm. Ed Marshall put a hand on his arm.

"Let's not put it that strong. I've simply found that I don't need you and the jaguar. The act might go big on some other show. But we—well, we just can't find a place for it; that's all. And when there's no use for a thing—"

"The man is fired."

"Very well, Lascaigne. Have it your own way. How do you want it arranged—to close at once and take two weeks' pay, or ride along until we get to some of the big towns?"

The black-browed animal trainer thought quickly. To leave at once would give him extra money—and the time to obtain a new engagement more quickly. But to remain—

"I shall not work the jaguar again?"

"I'd rather not. We'll get along without an act in that arena for a few days, and meanwhile I'll try to introduce that puma to the leopards. I think I can have them working together fine before a week's over. Incidentally, if you wouldn't mind I'd like to have you stand by after the matinee. I'm going to give them a try-out."

"I shall be glad."

"Good!" Ed Marshall held out a hand. "And I hope there's no hard feelings about this—this other thing, Lascaigne. Maybe it's foolish on our parts,—Jane and mine,—but we've got the notion circus crowds don't like brutality. And as long as we look at it that way—"

"Poof!" Lascaigne shrugged his shoulders airily. "It is but little to me. Lascaigne can get a job anywhere. I shall ride with the show to St. Louis. Then—*au revoir*."

Lascaigne, rolling a brown paper cigarette, watched Marshall over a shoulder as the latter walked away. At last, holding the match to the tube of tobacco far longer than was necessary, he eyed the flame between half-closed lids, tossed the charred stem away and approached the cage of the bounding jaguar.

"Still you try to break through, eh?" he asked. "Still you hate the puma. Maybe you hate him as much as I hate—"

He did not finish. For with that sentence, Jules Lascaigne had realized just whom he hated, how much he hated them, and why! All in the space of a few days he had seen the management of a great circus slip through his fingers, and with it a fortune. Had he been given the chance, had he been allowed to take the reins of the Grand Amalgamated, there would have been another circus for Jules Lascaigne. But he had been outwitted—and through the innocent trust of a girl! Again gripping the bars of the jaguar's den, Lascaigne gritted his teeth with the knowledge that Ed Marshall would be honest, that Ed Marshall would account for every penny, and the knowledge was wormwood.

"Why shouldn't he?" came in a whisper as the trainer turned toward his brutish pet. "He's going to marry her. He's—" Then he stopped and looked around. "Unless—"

THE parade had returned from its long route; across the way Sahib, the tiger, resumed his roaring, thunderous plunges, bringing fretfulness again to Black Midnight. On the puma's side, the oak runners which formed a groove for the sliding partition had become slightly loosened from the effect of the jaguar's lunges, and Lascaigne studied them carefully.

"While the puma is in the arena this afternoon, I must nail them stronger," he mused, as he went on. "Midnight must not break through now. He is my life!"

But when practice-time for the puma arrived, the observation was forgotten. Yelling animal-men surrounded the arena in the otherwise empty tent. Within, slightly bloody from vagrant scratches, his blank-cartridged revolver cracking forth the only commands that maddened beasts could understand, Ed Marshall leaped and swerved and veered as he strove to drive a group of hissing leopards back to their den, that Lascaigne and the others who waited behind him might rush forward to the rescue of a lacerated, bloody thing which writhed at the far edge of the arena.

For the spotted cats had rebelled against the intrusion of a strange beast. First one, then another, sallying to the attack, they had outwitted the prod-irons from the exterior; they had



"It was addressed to me," she said Lascaigne came close again. "A telegram from one's sweetheart, eh?"

evaded the hurrying Ed Marshall, and one by one had sent home their blows upon the harassed, confused puma, ripping and tearing its hide, laying open its throat, finally driving it, a cowering, yowling thing, to the very bars of the arena.

Through the small door was passed a reserve revolver, newly loaded, while with a quick motion Ed Marshall tossed his empty weapon back to Lascaigne for reloading. A new succession of blasting, burning flashes, and the leopards scurried for their cage. A rush! Then the black-browed Lascaigne, gaining the edge of the arena first, caught the bleeding form of the puma in his arms and raced for the door. In a moment Ed Marshall was beside him.

"Take him straight to the cage," he ordered. "I'll get bandages and iodine. Somebody's got to stick with him day and night, or he'll pass out on us. Hurry."

Lascaigne obeyed, wordlessly. One sentence had stuck in his brain. Who would that guardian be—unarmed, and, at night, when the den was on the circus train, with its side-boards tightly fastened, with the rushing and grinding and roaring of the train drowning every sound that might come from within? There would be no need to strengthen those runners now. . . .

An hour later the manager had tied the last knot and now looked up from the swathed, panting creature.

"Better get washed up, Lascaigne," he ordered.

"All right." From the other side of the partition could be heard the sound of hard-pulling breath and the scratching of claws. Ed Marshall went on:

"And take a turn around, figuring to drop back here about nine o'clock. You know more about handling this cat than the rest of the bunch; I'd like, if you don't mind, for you to stay in here while I check up. I'll try to get back just before they take the wagon down to the train, and I'll stick in the cage tonight. This puma's liable to die if somebody isn't here to keep its heart going."

"I'll be back." Lascaigne rose quickly and turned quickly away—quickly, perhaps, in order that the man beside him might not see the light in his eyes.

That night the band blared as ever in the big top, and the betinseled "acts" swayed and swam before the close-packed throngs of spectators. The clowns ambled about the hippodrome track, perpetrating their age-old jokes and oft-repeated grimaces. The lights gleamed, and the whole great tent glowed with hazy brilliancy, while in the menagerie Black Midnight still clawed at the boards which formed the prison of his hate. There were only a few scattered cages, awaiting the (Continued on page 144)

Clockwork

By Albert Payson Terhune

Illustrated by
E. F. Ward

THE idea came to Alan Burr as he sat listening to poor old Colliver patter forth the hard-learned insurance argument.

Ten years earlier, Colliver had been prosperous enough, in a small way, even though his income did not rise far above the expenses of his fair-sized home and fairer-sized family. And look at him now; seventy years old, and trying to sell insurance to his former friends!

That was the way of the world; that was the way of ill-padded old age. A bad twist in luck, a worse twist in judgment—and the stark need to keep on eating. Trying to learn at seventy a business which calls for the brain and push and earnestness of youth!

As Burr looked into the bulbous, tired, doggishly wistful eyes and listened to Colliver, Burr's own heart went sick—sick, not soft.

He himself was no whit better off, financially, than Colliver had been a short decade before. His pleasant suburban home was worth no more than Colliver's debt-seized house and grounds in the same village of Paignton had been.

Panic-fierce resentment swirled in him—resentment, and a craving to avoid a fate like Colliver's. It was not the first time such sorry musings had come to Burr, but never before so poignantly. And through this hot reaction, his idea was born.

Cutting in on the old chap, Burr said, half-absently:

"I'll take a five-thousand life policy. That's all I can afford to add to my other insurance just now. I—"

Colliver's thanks interrupted him. Burr scarce noticed. His own voice had begun to trail off. The idea was taking form—not in minute detail, but along general lines. And Burr was enveloped in it. Cautiously he took his first step.

"Is—do your people handle any other kind of insurance, except life?" he asked with elaborate carelessness.

Colliver stopped in the shakily hurried act of fishing out fountain pen and blanks, and peered in owlish uncertainty.

"Why—why, yes," he stammered. "I—I believe we do. The firm handles fire and marine and burglar and—"

"I asked," said Burr slowly, his mind still a-grapple with the idea, "because up at Paignton, lately, they've been having a bit



"The assistant manager at Blankenby's let me in on the ground floor. The regular valuation on the pendant is twenty-five thousand dollars."

of a burglar epidemic. You may have read about it. You used to live up that way, didn't you? My wife is nervous over it. She has a few rather good pieces of jewelry and that sort of thing. She's been at me to buy a safe. But it occurred to me, just now, that she might be still better pleased if I should take out a small burglary-insurance policy. She—"

"Of course!" exclaimed Colliver. "Of course! Quite right. Very wise. I—personally, I specialize in life insurance. But I should be grate—I should be willing to have you take out your burglar policy, through me. Suppose you let me call—say at this time tomorrow—and outline to you just what we have to offer along that line? I'm sure it will appeal most strongly to a man of your business acumen. I'll take up no more of your valuable time today. I know how pressed you are. But tomorrow I shall give myself the pleasure. And in the meanwhile, I thank you for seeing the wisdom of letting us write out a life policy for you. You will never regret it. When I call, tomorrow, I shall let you know which of the company's doctors is to be assigned to

examine you. And I shall have all the data ready for you in the burglary insurance matter. Good day, and—thank you once more, Mr. Burr."

The old fellow bowed himself out, and made tottery haste to his firm's office, there to put in a full afternoon and evening acquainting himself with the details and ramifications of theft policies—a theme whereon he was totally ignorant. Here, through a single interview, he saw his way toward branching out in other roads of insurance and of piling up new wealth. And for the first time since his bankruptcy, Colliver was beamingly happy.

Alan Burr sat hunched low in his chair, after his aged visitor departed. Eyes shut, brow puckered, he was straightening out that idea of his—rubbing away its smudges, strengthening its salient lines, bringing into prominence its hazier phases. By and by he began to scribble words and figures on a scratch-pad—erasing, amending, building up. An hour later he got to his feet, tore to tiny scraps the several sheets of computations, and cut off work for the day.

Before catching his regular afternoon train home, Burr made



two or three stops at uptown stores—stores of widely diverging types. His idea was shaping to a solid plan.

In the smoking-car that afternoon he was unwontedly talkative to the neighbor who chanced to share his seat.

"I saw old man Colliver today," he began. "You remember him. Used to live out on the Wyckoff Road. He's flat broke. It got me to thinking. Here I'm mulling along, doing a tolerable business, and spending about ninety per cent of what I earn—like all the rest of you. And in another few years, I'll begin to get old. What'll I have to show for it? By the time I begin to slow down, my income is due to do the same thing. And then what'll—"

"Say," observed his seatmate, "it isn't six o'clock, yet. That line of thought doesn't hit a normal man till along about two o'clock on nights when he can't sleep. You're eight hours ahead of schedule. What's the—"

"Oh, this isn't one of those pillow-thumping, no-answer insomnia stunts," replied Burr. "I've got the answer. At least, I think I have. Want to hear it?"

Polliteness overcame truthfulness in his listener. After a futile look around in search of an empty seat beside some one with whom he could feign sudden business, the man nodded resignedly.

"What do I do with such little spare cash as I have?" harangued Burr. "I stick it into the savings bank or into some kind of negotiable stock. Then when I'm tempted to buy something big, or when I need a few dollars in the business or at home, I draw it out, or part of it, and spend it. In other words, I hoard it up till it's all gone. So do most people."

"If—"

"Now, here's what I'm going to do," pursued Burr. "And I'm going to begin, right away, to do it. I'm going to put my spare cash into jewelry. Not into folderol gewgaws, but into solid, bank-value jewelry—diamonds. I've read—and I've verified it—that diamonds increase in value, in the average market, at the rate of about ten per cent a year. In other words, a thousand dollars' worth of diamonds, bought today, is going to be worth two thousand dollars ten years from now. As good an investment as a conservative man could ask for. I—"

"Like blazes it is!" snorted the other. "That old yarn had white whiskers on it fifty years ago. Why, here's just one instance: The wife inherited her mother's diamond bracelet. She'd heard her mother say it had cost four thousand dollars, when her husband gave it to her as a wedding present. It was an ugly gob of wealth, and the wife decided she'd rather have a four-thousand-dollar touring car. So she took the bracelet to a jeweler. And he told her the diamonds were 'old mine stones'—that means they were cut in an old style and would have to be recut before anyone'd buy 'em nowadays. And he told her the whole lot wouldn't net her more than—"

"I know," broke in Burr impatiently. "I've heard the same line of talk before. But by watching styles in cutting, and all that, a man can find out when to unload and to stock up with a new kind of cut that will stay in fashion till it's time for him to switch again. Diamonds change mighty little in style in ten years. Anyhow, I've figured it all out. And that's the thing I'm going to do."

"A chap will draw money out of the bank or even sell stock when he's pinched for ready funds or when he wants to branch out in a new wing on his house or a trip to Europe. But he'll think mighty carefully before he takes his jewelry and sells it or hocks it. That's human-nature psychology. It's *my* psychology, anyhow. I'd never have the face to blow money or lift myself out of a twenty-two-caliber hole by selling my diamonds. I'd find some wiser way of weathering things. It'll be a corking good safeguard. Any time I have spare cash or a windfall, I'll soak it into more diamonds. In that way I aim to be able to live without worrying by the time my grip on the business game begins to slip. It's my own notion, of course, and—"

"And the first enterprising burglar that busts into your house is going to clean out your whole investment," suggested his seatmate.

Burr's lips tightened ever so little. But his voice was steady, as he made reply:

"Do you suppose I'll leave the diamonds strewn about the floor for him to sweep up? I thought of all that. People at Paignton aren't thinking of much else but burglars, nowadays. In the first place, I'm going to buy a good, strong little safe. In fact, I ordered one today. In the second place, I'm going to take out full burglar-insurance on every carat I invest in. In the third place, I'll rent a deposit box, over at the Paignton bank, and keep the bulk of it in that. So—"

"All that outlay is liable to eat nice little holes in your ten per cent a year—especially the insurance. I guess they charge a sizable premium on jewelry at the insurance companies. I'd stick to the old way, if I were you. If this buying and holding of jewelry, as a permanent investment, was any good, Morgan and Rockefeller and the rest of them would have kept out of the stock market and concentrated on diamonds. Ten per cent a year is—"

"I tell you," returned Burr patiently, "I've worked it all out. Now here, roughly, is the—"

"Excuse me, wont you?" interrupted the other, jumping up as a half-seat ahead of them was vacated. "I've got to see Van Dyne about our golf tournament. G'night."

He escaped further boredom. But the rest of mankind did not. At the next station another half-seat was left vacant. Burr crossed over to it and sat down beside its occupant—one of his fellow-townsmen. To this uninterested hearer he outlined his plan, all over again.

As soon as he reached home, he proceeded to relate the

scheme in lavish detail to his wife—a slackly pretty woman of early middle age.

Mrs. Burr was not impressed at all favorably, just at first. The notion of tying up extra funds in such a way that they could not easily be gotten at in a crisis did not appeal to her in the least.

But she softened to the project, even warmed toward it, when Burr promised she might wear some of the diamonds on state occasions, and that they really would be hers as much as his. Thus by dint of playing on all the long-understood strings of her facile nature, he won at last her dazzled consent.

After all, it would be thrilling to go to the Country Club dances with more diamonds on her overdressed body than all the other women together could muster. And it would be impressive to point out the safe to callers, and whisper to them the precise cash amount in precious stones concealed by the shiny black door. When Burr volunteered to have the safe's combination spell the letters of her own nickname, "Bess," she surrendered with rapture.

THE Burrs were hosts at the Bridge Club's weekly meeting that night, and husband and wife bored their guests to extinction by expatiating at endless length upon the wondrous plan.

Three days later the safe was delivered. Bess had conjured up a mental picture of a receptacle like one of those she had seen dangling in mid-air on thick ropes with a "Danger" sign on the sidewalk below. To her dismay, the new safe was scarce more than two feet square. It fitted neatly into the niche between the bookcase and the radiator, in the living-room. Not until she had opened it seven or eight times by means of the miraculous combination, spelled out by the letters of her name, did she become reconciled to its lack of impressiveness.

Two days afterward Alan Burr came home from the city on the noon train. On his way to his own house he stopped at the Paignton bank and demanded a private chat with the cashier. The cashier chanced to be a member of the Bridge Club. So he was less astounded than otherwise he might have been when Burr drew from the inside pocket of his vest a flat black morocco case, and opening it with an air of secretive triumph, displayed a pendant of more than fair-sized diamonds.

The triangle of jewels twinkled merrily in the subdued light of the little bank's back room. They did not fill the gloomy place with a blaze of splendor. No jewels do, outside of story-books. But they shone prettily, and they exuded an aura of money. The cashier eyed them with decided approval.

"Got them so soon?" he remarked. "And mighty good-looking they are. Must have cost nearly—"

"They cost precisely \$24,386," Burr assured him. "I got a slight cash discount, and the assistant manager at Blankenby's is a distant cousin of my wife's. So he let me in, a little way, on the ground floor. The regular valuation on this pendant is twenty-five thousand dollars. So, you see, I begin my new savings-campaign with a net profit of six hundred and fourteen dollars. Not bad for a start, eh?"

The cashier did not answer. He was eying the pendant with new respect. He had understood Burr was more than ordinarily prosperous for a man in a small business. Yet it astonished him that Alan had been able to lay his hands on nearly twenty-five thousand dollars in cash in less than a single week. As Burr kept only a petty account at the Paignton bank for tradesmen's bills, and did his major banking in the city, the cashier had no exact knowledge of his circumstances. And mild admiration awoke in his breast for this forehanded neighbor, even while his financial senses were jarred to contempt by such doubtful investment of the sum. And having no knowledge of Burr's four-day scurry of realizing and of borrowing and of hypothecating and of mortgaging, neither the admiration nor the contempt was mitigated.

ALAN BURR read his face with ease. Pulling from his pocket a sheet of letterhead paper, he handed it to the cashier with pardonable swagger.

"Blankenby's bill of sale for the pendant!" he announced. "And now, please, I'd like to look at one of those deposit boxes we were talking about the other evening."

The cashier summoned the clerk in charge of the hall-bedroom-sized vault in the basement. He himself, at Burr's request, went down to the vault with the two, and gave sage advice as to the choice of a deposit box.

When the box at last was selected and had been opened by the twin keys, Alan Burr laid the morocco case lovingly in the drawer

and stood back, beaming fatuously, to note the effect. As the clerk was about to close the compartment, Alan took out the case and returned it to his inner pocket.

"I'll pay my year's rent now, for the box," he said, "and I'll be back here before closing time, to put this case in it again. You see," he explained a trifle sheepishly, "I promised to show this treasure to my wife. And she seemed so delighted with the idea of gloating over it that I suggested she invite one or two of our friends to lunch today to see it too. A sort of 'pendant luncheon,' you know. Not a crowd, of course—just one or two friends who can get off at noon. Our pastor and his wife, and Mayor Kahn, and old Mrs. Frayne. I think that's all. Silly notion, of course. But you know what women are. And the Missus was so white about falling in with this notion of mine that I felt she had some sort of minor splurge coming to her. I'll bring back the pendant before you people close up, at three. By the way, I bought that safe I was telling you about. So we're doubly protected."

"What's the sense of paying for a safe, when you've got a deposit box?" asked the cashier. "If you're really trying to economize—"

"I know," laughed Burr self-tolerantly, "I know. You're right. But there may be times when I'll let the Missus wear this pendant or some of the other jewelry I buy—at parties and things, you see. And as you people aren't open at night, we'll feel surer if we have a good strong safe to lock them in till morning. Besides, it'll be handy for the silver and for the bits of jewelry my wife already has. She—"

"What make is it?" asked the clerk, who was tagging along at their heels as they climbed to the main floor of the bank and started toward the street entrance. "The new safe, I mean."

"It's a Crackproof Midget," answered Burr proudly. "And it's a little beauty. I'll guarantee no burglar could—"

A snicker from the clerk and a laugh of undisguised scorn from the cashier broke in on his brag. Burr stared at them.

"Why, man," scoffed the cashier from the depths of his professional knowledge, "the Crackproof Midget is a ferruginous prune. It isn't a dead one—because it never was alive. It has about the same solid burglar-proof qualities as a really good biscuit tin. The Crackproof Midget is the gold brick of the safe-trade. It's been the joke of the ages with bank people and the like. Some poor fish is forever buying one. And the first semi-amateur thief that happens in on him opens it with a button-hook and walks off with the loot. Why didn't you come to me, before you—"

BURR'S utterly crestfallen look made the cashier pause in his tirade, from sheer pity.

"How could I know that?" growled Burr. "The ads praised it a lot, and there was a testimonial from—"

"Most goods are apt to be more or less favorably mentioned in their own advertisements," suggested the cashier dryly. "Well, as long as you keep your most valuable things over here, it doesn't much matter what kind of safe you sport. Be sure to get back before three, though. I wouldn't trust a Crackproof Midget not to open itself. Here's your receipt for the box-rent."

"Thanks," grumbled Burr, his early elation gone, leaving him slumping and miserable to look upon. "I'll be back with it on time. Don't worry about that. I'm not likely to forget—especially after the cheery news you've given me about my safe. I'll be doubly careful about it today, because at three I'm starting back to town in the car. There's a directors' meeting of the Steeloid at the company's offices tonight. And I've got to be there. Those meetings drag along to beat the band. They're never adjourned before eleven, at the earliest. And that means I always miss the eleven o'clock train—the last train back here till the five-two in the morning. Generally I spend the night in town, after the meetings. But all this burglar scare has gotten on the Missus' nerves, and I don't like to leave her alone, with just the maids, all night long. So I told her I'd go in, in the car, and drive out after the meeting. That ought to get me here by one o'clock, or even a few minutes earlier."

The cashier was anxious to go back to his neglected cage. He listened with fidgety impatience to the long-winded Burr, and as the latter paused for breath, he made an excuse to say good-by and hurry behind the grille. He wondered, amusedly, at the change this money-saving fad was making in his old neighbor, Burr, as a rule, had been taciturn, and never discussed his affairs with outsiders. Yet since this idea had taken possession of him, he had degenerated into a chronic prattler, and had taken to unburdening himself of long speeches about his actions and his



The clergyman, humoring the whim of his host, took the receptacle from Burr's hand, glanced admiringly at the pendant.

plans, to anyone who would listen. A few weeks more of this, and the once-popular man would be due for the seldom-vacant post of Neighborhood Bore.

Alan Burr hurried on to his quarter-mile-distant house—a sizable villa set well back in its own strip of grounds, and with a stable behind it which had been converted, or perverted, into a one-car garage and loft.

His wife met him at the gate. She could scarcely wait until they reached the privacy of the front hall, before gazing upon the pendant which was planned to be both the cornerstone of their fortune and the visible symbol of Mrs. Burr's social importance.

The luncheon, that day, was a glittering success, so far as its host and hostess were concerned. The guests, however, had passed happier hours. Mrs. Burr wore the pendant, with glowing

pride, on her slightly withered throat. She did more. Not only did she pass it from guest to guest, but she made the lunchers watch her brilliant skill in opening the safe, by means of its combination—an exploit which still aroused in her a feeling of tremendous self-adulation.

Alan Burr's contribution to his guests' pleasure was an all-round display of the Blankenby bill-of-sale, and an almost continuous discourse upon the budding of his new plan for saving money. He had read up, more than a little, it appeared, during the past week, on diamond-values, and he was even ready with a carefully prepared table of prices, proving the steady and swift advance in the cost of precious stones since 1850, together with a computation, based on these figures, showing what his own income from jewel-investments might reasonably be in another twenty years.

The Burrs' pastor listened with a show of real interest, and even asked a few intelligent questions. By reason of his cloth and his experience, he was inured to boredom, or else had long since grown to regard it as an inescapable part of his earthly burden. His dutiful wife, too, followed in her saintly spouse's footsteps—this from habit; and the two were highly satisfactory listeners.

Old Mrs. Frayne, after the first glamour of diamonds and dollars faded from her mental retina, forgot to listen, and lapsed into a sweet reverie as to the arrangements for a dinner she was to give, the next week.

As for Mayor Kahn, of Paignton, as time dragged on he cursed the electioneering needs which forced him to undergo such an ordeal at the hands of an influential voter. He grew even pettish, as he noted that Burr's monologue was interfering with the ordinary tempo of such a meal and was drawing the courses out to an unbearable length.

After luncheon, as the party straggled into the living-room, the mayor glanced surreptitiously at the big clock in the hallway. He had not had the courage of rudeness, to look at his watch, during the endless meal. Yet much he hoped the hour might be so far advanced that he could find excuse to take his leave.

To his disgust, the clock's hands indicated only ten minutes after two. Kahn could have sworn the luncheon had endured for not less than half a century, and he prepared to pave the way for an early departure. He could not very well drive off, the instant the meal ended. But he dreamed of the first moment he might reasonably hope to break away without causing offense.

Mrs. Burr once more was playing a scintillant obbligation on the safe's knob, calling all to witness again the ease wherewith her secret knowledge of the combination enabled her to open a steel door impervious to everyone else.

"I'm not so sure about it's being thief-proof," whispered Burr to the clergyman. "I don't want to say anything to scare the Missus or rob her of her childlike faith in the thing, because I have to be away this evening—in town, directors' meeting—drive back in the car. I had the same faith in it, up to noon, today. You see, I've had no experience in such matters, and I took the safe-company's word. But the cashier of the bank here tells me the Crackproof Midget is no good at all. Says anybody can break into it. Cheerful news, isn't it, after all I paid for it?"

"Too bad!" murmured the clergyman. "Can't the company be made to refund—"

"Oh, I doubt it," said Burr pessimistically. "If the safe is good, there's nothing to refund. If it's worthless, why, the fact that the concern is still doing business proves there's some loophole to prevent suckers from getting their money back. By the way,—with a glance at the hall clock,—I have to be at the bank, a little before three,

to put that pendant back in the safe-deposit box. From there I am driving into town. If you like, I can give you and your wife a lift, as far as the parsonage. We don't need to start for another twenty minutes or so. I—"

"Why, there's my car!" exclaimed Mrs. Frayne, happily swallowing a yawn as the grit of wheels on the gravel drive interrupted the hostess' exposition of the safe's mystery. "I told Peters not to come till three. Since he's here so early,—peeping at the hall clock for the tenth time,—I'm afraid I'd better go. He glowers so, when I keep him waiting! I'd discharge him, only they all seem to glower alike. And the next one might glower even worse. It's been a lovely—"

"I ought to be hurrying along too," declared Kahn with much eagerness. "I've an appointment at—"

He paused, frowning at the watch he had instinctively taken from his pocket as he spoke.

"Hello!" he cried. "My watch must be racing. Or else that clock of yours is running down. My watch says two minutes past three. And your clock says only twenty after two. It—"

Burr and the clergyman, after the manner of their sex when a time-question is broached, drew out their watches.

"Three minutes past three," announced the pastor.

"Three-two," said Burr in the same breath, adding perplexedly: "Bess, I told you I was going to send to the city for some one to overhaul that clock. I forgot to. It's the third time in five days the old contraption has stopped for half an hour or so and then gone on. It—"

"If we had any children in the house," sighed Mrs. Burr, "I'd say they stopped it and then set it going again, just for mischief. In all the years we've had it, it never did that way till the past week. I'll have the clock man, here at Paignton, come over and—"

"No!" said Burr incisively. "Don't! It's too valuable to let one of these local roustabouts tinker with it. I'll have a man come out from Blankenby's, an expert. Remember—don't do

anything about it till I get a chance to send the Blankenby chap to do it. I—"

He gurgled. A vacuous chagrin overspread his face.

"Say," he ejaculated ruefully, "if it's really after three o'clock, the bank is closed for the day—and they close their safe-deposit vault at the same time. That means I can't put the pendant in the deposit box there till tomorrow. What rotten luck!"

He glared worriedly at the open safe, on the central shelf of which lay the morocco case. Then he looked at his watch again. The guests were fidgeting hallward.

"Well," suggested the Mayor, "the only thing you can do is to leave it in the safe overnight. It ought to be secure enough there. I must hurry on. I—"

"Wait," urged Burr, taking the case out of (Continued on page 138)



"Hurry!" sputtered Alan. "I'm afraid my house has been entered."

The Settling of the Sage

Illustrated by
Douglas Duer



By
Hal G. Evarts

CALVIN HARRIS asked for and obtained employment at the Three Bar ranch. A little later he sought an interview with "Billie" Warren, mistress of the ranch since the death of her father, Calvin Warren, and told her who he was—her father's namesake, son of his old friend William Harris, for whom she herself had been named.

Calvin Harris, the man she distrusted! For her father's will had stipulated that half of his property should go to the younger Harris under the condition that the man should make his home on the Three Bar for two out of the first three years after her father's decease. The whole of it was to go to him in case she failed to make her own home at the Three Bar during her co-heir's stay, or if she married another during that time.

Harris stayed on at the Three Bar, in a relation of armed neutrality with his co-heir, Billie Warren. He won the respect of the other men—and the enmity of Slade, a neighboring ranchman who paid court to Billie even while he stole her cattle.

The round-up started with Harris serving as foreman; and he presently had occasion to order away a notorious cattle-rustler named Harper, whom he suspected of being in league with Slade. Later Harris caught one of Billie's men, Morrow,—who, he inferred, was in Slade's pay,—driving off some Three Bar cattle instead of bringing them in, and discharged him. Shortly thereafter a bullet, fired from ambush by Morrow, hit Harris' saddle. The Three Bar men pursued. One, a youth named Bangs, failed to return—was found murdered, probably by Harper's men. Afterward old Rile Foster, Bang's particular friend, disappeared. Presently two of Harper's men were found shot dead, gun in hand.

Later, at a dance, Foster appeared, killed Harper and one of his men—and was himself killed by Harper's lieutenant, Lang.

It was about this time that Billie learned that Calvin Harris' father had willed her half of his own large property, providing she remained at the Three Bar for five years after her father's death. Now too Carlos Deane, an attractive young business man whom Billie had met in the East, came to visit at the Three Bar.

Harris and Billie planned to farm the Three Bar—plant crops and encourage others to do likewise. Slade bitterly opposed this, as it would mean the curtailment of his range, and he now began violent measures to destroy the Three Bar. A dozen of the thoroughbred bulls imported to grade up the Three Bar stock were shot. And at the round-up, the Three Bar cattle were stampeded by mysterious riders. Harris started a backfire: caused the spread of a rumor that the Three Bar would pay a thousand dollars each for the death of certain of Slade's and Lang's men. Harris of course denied the rumor—but doubtful characters hastened to avoid association with Slade or Lang.

CHAPTER XIII

THE first warm days of spring had drawn the frost from the ground. Billie rode beside Harris to the lower field. A tiny cabin stood completed on every filing. Two men were digging post-holes across the valley below the edge of the last fall's plowing, and the mule-teams were steadily breaking out another strip.

"Almost a year," she said, referring to the commencement of the new work.

"Just a year today," Harris corrected, and he was thinking of the day he had first met the Three Bar girl. "This is our anniversary, sort of."

She nodded as she caught his meaning.

"The anniversary of our partnership," she said. "You're good on dates. We've pulled together pretty well, considering our start."

"It was a rocky trail for the first few days," he confessed. "But all the time, I was hoping it would get smoothed out."

"You told me there were millions of miles of sage just outside," she recollected, "and millions of cows—and girls."

"Later I told you something else," he said. "And I've been meaning it ever since. The road to the outside is closed. If I was to start now, I'd lose the way."

She pointed down the valley as a drove of horses moved toward them under the guidance of a dozen men. The hands would start breaking out the *remuda* the following day. The spring work was on.

"Off to a running start on another year," he said. "—and sure to hold our lead." They drew aside as the horses of the *remuda* thundered past and on toward the corrals. "From today on out, you and I'll be a busy pair," he prophesied.

Early rains had moistened the fields, and they were faintly green with tiny shoots of oats. These thickened into a rank velvety carpet while the homesteaders were hauling a hundred loads of rocks to form a crude dam across the stream below the take-out. The water was gradually raised till it ran almost flush with the top of the headgate. The gates were lifted, and the diverted waters sped smoothly down the new channel to carry life to a portion of the sagebrush desert.

Billie Warren half closed her eyes and viewed the broad expanse of rippling green in the bottoms. How many times she had stood here in the past with old Cal Warren while he visioned this very picture which now unrolled before her eyes in reality—the transformation of the Three Bar flat from a desert waste to a scene of abundant fertility under the reclaiming touch of life-giving water.

It was a quiet picture of farm life if one looked only upon the blooming fields and took no account of the raw, barren foothills that flanked them—the gaunt, towering range behind. She found it difficult to link the scene before her with the deviltry of a few months past. The killing of Bangs, and Rile Foster's consequent grim retaliation—the raid on the Three Bar bulls and the stampede of her trail-herd—all those seemed part of some life so long in the past as to form no part of her present.

The continued immunity had had its effect, regardless of her earlier suspicions. She still realized the possibility of further raids, but they had been so long delayed that the prospect had ceased to impress her as imminent. Tiny and Russ changed their head of water. As they shifted positions, she noted that each



His gun flashed into his hand, but—his knees sagged under him as

carried some tool beside his irrigator's shovel. No man in the field ever strayed far from the rifle which was part of his equipment. But even this was an evidence of vigilance which had met her eye every day for months and had ceased to impress.

They walked to the near edge of the field, and Harris stooped to part the knee-deep grain, pointing to the slender stems of alfalfa with their delicate leaves.

"We have a record stand of young hay," he said. "It's thick all through—every place I've looked." He straightened up and laughed. "And I expect I've looked at every acre. I've been right interested in those little shoots. It's deep-rooted now. The worst is past. I don't see that anything that could happen now would kill it out. Next year we'll put up a thousand tons of hay."

He dropped a hand on her shoulder and stood looking down at her.

"Billie, don't you think it's about time you were finding out what Judge Colton wants?" he asked. "He's been right insistent on your going back to confer with him."

The girl shook her head positively. Two months before, Judge Colton had written that he must advise with her on matters of importance and suggested that she come at once. Harris had urged her to go, and almost daily referred to it.

"I can't go now," she said, "not till I've seen one whole season through. When the first Three Bar crop is cut and in the stack, I'll go. All other business must wait till then. You two can't drive me away till after I see that first crop in the stack."

"If you go now, you'd likely get back before we're through



a forty-five slug struck him an inch above the buckle of his belt.

cutting," he urged. "And the Judge has written twice in the last two weeks."

Before she could answer this, a horseman appeared on the valley road. The farthest irrigator, merely a speck in the distance, exchanged shovel for rifle and crossed to the fence. The rider, as if expecting some such move, pulled up his horse and approached at a walk.

Harris saw the two confer. The horseman handed some object to the other and urged his horse on toward the house. He was one of the sheriff's deputies. He grinned as he tapped his empty holster.

"One of your watchdogs lifted my gun," he said. He handed Harris a note.

After reading it, Harris looked at his watch and snapped it shut, glanced at the sinking sun and turned to the girl.

"I have to make a little jaunt," he explained. "Alden wants to see me. I'll take Waddles along. As we go down, I'll send Russ or Tiny up to cook for the rest."

The deputy turned his horse into the corral, and five minutes later Harris and Waddles rode away. Waddles was mounted on Creamer, the big buckskin.

"We'll have to step right along," Harris said. "It's forty miles."

They held the horses to a stiff swinging trot that devoured the miles without seeming to tire their mounts. For four hours they headed south and a little east, never slackening their pace except to breathe the horses on some steep ascent. The buckskin and the paint-horse had lost the first snap of their trot, and it was evi-

dent that they would soon begin to lag. Another hour, and they had slowed down perceptibly.

The two men dismounted and tied the horses to the brush in a sheltered coulee, then started across a broad flat on foot. Out in the center a spot showed darker than the rest—the old cabin where Carpenter had elected to start up for himself after being discharged from the Three Bar.

When within a hundred yards of the cabin, a horse tied to a hitch-post in front neighed shrilly, and Harris laid a restraining hand on Waddles' arm. They knelt in the brush as the door opened and a man stood silhouetted against the light. After a space of two minutes Carp's voice reached them.

"Not a sound anywhere," he said. "Likely some horses drifting past." He went inside and closed the door. The two men circled the cabin and came up from the rear. A window stood open some eight inches from the bottom. Through the holes in the ragged flour-sack that served as a curtain Harris secured a view of the inside. Carp and Slade sat facing across a little table in the center of the room.

"I want to clean up and go," Carp was saying. "This damn' Harris put me on the blacklist."

"You've been on it for three months," Slade said. "Nothing has happened yet. But don't let me keep you from pulling out any time you like."

"But I've got a settlement to make," Carp insisted. "Let's get that fixed up."

"Settlement?" Slade asked. "Settlement with who?" Carpenter leaned across the table and tapped it to emphasize his remarks.

"Listen: Morrow gave me a bill-of-sale from you calling for a hundred head of Three Bar she-stock, rebranded Triangle on the hip."

Slade nodded shortly.

"I gave Morrow that for two years' back pay when he quit. He could sell out to you if he liked."

"And now I want to sell out," Carp said. "—and be gone from here."

"How many head have you got?" Slade asked.

"Three hundred head," Carp stated.

"You've increased right fast," Slade remarked. "I'd think you'd want to stay where you was doing so well. How much do you want?"

"Five dollars straight through," Carp said.

"Cheap enough," Slade answered, "if only a man was in the market." He looked straight at Carp, and the man's eyes slipped away from Slade's steady gaze. "But I'm not buying. Likely Morrow will buy you out."

"Morrow ought to be here now," Carp stated. "He's coming tonight."

"Then I'd better go," Slade said. "I don't like Morrow's ways."

The thud of a horse's hoofs sounded from close at hand. The two men outside lay flat in the shadow of the house. A shrill

whistle, twice repeated, called Carp to his feet, and he crossed to the door to answer it. Morrow dismounted and came to the door. He nodded briefly to Slade, hesitating on the sill as if surprised to find him there. Carp lost no time in stating his proposition. He spoke jerkily.

"I want to get out," he said. "I'll sell for five dollars a head."

Morrow held up a hand to silence him.

"I'll likely buy—but I never talk business in a crowd." He crossed the room and sat with his back to the window. "There's plenty of time."

"I take it I'm the crowd," Slade remarked, "so I'll step out."

MORROW stiffened suddenly in his chair as a cold ring was pressed against the back of his neck through the crack of the window. At the same instant Carp had tilted back and raised one knee. The gun that rested on his leg was peeping over the table at Slade.

"Steady!" he ordered. "Sit tight!"

The window was thrown up to its full height by Waddles, and the curtain snatched away from the gun which Harris held against Morrow's neck. Carp's apparent nervousness had vanished. He flipped back his vest and revealed a marshal's badge.

"I'd as soon take you along feet first as any way," he said, "so if you feel like acting up, you can start any time now."

Slade's eyes came back from the two men at the window and rested on the badge.

"So that's it," he said with evident relief. "A real arrest—when I figured it was an old-fashioned murder you had planned. What do you want with me?"

Waddles had reached down and removed Morrow's gun.

"A number of things," Carpenter said, "—obstructing the home-
stead laws, for one."

Slade shook his head and smiled.

"You've got the wrong party," he said. "You can't prove anything on me."

"I don't count on that," Carp said. "You've covered up right well. We know you work through Morrow, but can't prove a word. We've got enough to hang him, but I expect maybe you'll get off."

There was a scrape of feet outside the door, and the Sheriff entered and took possession of Slade's gun as Harris and Waddles moved round from the window and went inside.

"I'm a few minutes late," Alden said. "I wasn't right sure how close I was to the house, so I left my horse too far back."

"Here's your prisoners," Carp said, "—captured and delivered as agreed. I haven't anything on Slade myself, but if you want him, he's yours."

"What do you want with me?" Slade demanded a second time.

"I'm picking you up on complaint made by the Three Bar," Alden said. "I'll have to take you along."

Slade turned on Harris.

"What charge?" he asked.

"Killing twelve Three Bar bulls on the last day of August," Harris stated.

"I was out with the ranger," Slade said. "Back in the hills. You know that yourself. That charge won't stick."

"Then maybe it was the second of May," Harris returned. "I sort of forget."

Slade suddenly grasped the significance of this arrest.

"How many of you fellows are pussy-footing round out here?"

"I don't mind confessing that several of the boys are riding for you," Carp informed. "But while we've cinched Morrow, we haven't been able to trace it back to you. I even got put on the blacklist, thinking you might do business with me direct after that—knowing my word wouldn't stand against yours. But not you! You've covered your tracks."

CARP spoke softly, as if to himself, detailing his failure to gather conclusive evidence against Slade.

"I even run your rebrand on fifty or so Three Bar cows. You knew there wasn't a dollar changed hands when Morrow gave me that paper which licensed me to rustle my own she-stock. We can't even prove that you didn't owe him two years' back pay and squared up by giving him that bill-of-sale. There's never a check of yours made out to Morrow that's gone through the bank. The boys who staged the stampede drew down a lump sum from Morrow for the job. We know who was financing the raid—can't be proved. The idea in my starting up was to run your rebrand on any number of Three Bar cows. Later Morrow would buy me out—acting for you; can't be proved. Oh, you're in the clear, all right."

Slade broke in upon the monologue. This recitation of his probable immunity from conviction on every count, far from reassuring him, served to confirm his original suspicion as to the reason for this arrest without witnesses. If the Sheriff had wanted him, he had but to send word for Slade to come in. He threw out one last line, and the answer convinced him beyond all doubt.

"Then a lawyer will have me out in an hour," he predicted.

"A lawyer could," Alden said, "if you saw one. But we've decided not to let you have access to legal advice for the first few days."

Slade turned on Carpenter.

"This sort of thing is against the law," he said. "You're a United States marshal. How can you go in on a kidnaping deal?"

"I'm not in on it," Carp shrugged. "The Sheriff asked me to arrest you at the first opportunity. I've turned you over to him. The rest is his affair. Besides, like I was mentioning, they can't prove a thing on you. As soon as they're convinced of that, they'll turn you loose."

The Sheriff nodded gravely.

"The very day I'm satisfied Harris can't prove his charges, I'll throw open the doors. You'll be a free man that minute."

A VISION of the near future swept across Slade's mind. If he should be locked up for three months and discharged for lack of evidence, it would wreck him as surely as the rumors of the last few months had cut Lang's men off from the rest of the world. Squatters had filed on every available site throughout his range and now waited to see if the Three Bar would win its fight. If the news should be spread that he was locked up, these nesters would rush in. On his release, he would find them everywhere. With marshals scattered through the ranks of his own men, intent on upholding the home-
stead laws, he would be helpless to drive them out. The pictures of the different valleys suitable for ranch-sites, scattered here and there over his extensive range, traveled through his mind in kaleidoscopic procession—and he visioned a squatter outfit on every one. If they locked him up at this time, he was lost.

He nodded slowly.

"Well, I guess you've got me," he said. "I don't see that it will amount to much, anyway. Sooner or later you'll let me out." He raised his arms high above his head and stretched. Under cover of this casual move he swiftly raised one foot.

Slade planted his boot on the edge of the light table and gave a tremendous shove. The far edge caught the Sheriff across the legs and overthrew him. The lantern crashed to the floor, and at the same instant Morrow aimed a sideways, sweeping kick at Carpenter's ankles. As the marshal went down, his head struck the corner-post of a bunk, and he did not rise.

With a single sweep Morrow caught the back of his chair and swung it above his head for the spot which Waddles had occupied at the instant the light went out. The weapon splintered in his hands as it found its mark, and as the big man struck the dirt floor, Morrow leaped for the dim light which indicated the open door.

A huge paw clamped onto one ankle, and a backhanded wrench sent him flying across the room to the far wall. With a sweep of the other hand Waddles slammed the door with a bang that jarred the cabin.

"We've got 'em trapped," the big voice exulted. "We've got 'em sewed in a sack."

Harris made one long reach and swung the butt of his gun for Slade's head as the table went down, but Slade, with the same motion, vaulted the prostrate Sheriff. The force of the blow threw Harris off balance, and as he tripped and reeled to his knees, Slade's boot-heel scored a glancing blow on his skull and felled him. He regained his feet, gripping a fragment of the chair Morrow had smashed over Waddles' head, and struck at a dim form which loomed against the vague light of the window.

The shape closed with him, and he went down in a corner with Slade. Slade struck him twice in the face, writhed away and gained his feet, backslashing at Harris' head with his spurs. Harris caught a hand-hold in the long fur of the other's chaps, wrapped both arms round Slade above the knees and dragged him back. His hand found Slade's throat and he squeezed down on it as the man raised both knees and thrust them against his stomach to break the hold. Slade's arm swept a circle on the floor in search of the gun Harris had dropped, but he was jerked a foot from the floor and Harris jammed his head against the log wall—jammed again, and Slade crumpled into a limp heap. Harris held him there, unwilling to take a chance that the other feigned unconsciousness. But Slade was out of the fight.

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"It's been right lonesome without a partner to talk it all over with," he said. "I can't hold down that job alone."

The Sheriff struggled to his feet as Waddles tossed Morrow back from the door and slammed it shut. He closed with Morrow, but the man eluded him. He dared not shoot, with friends and enemies struggling all about the black pit of the little room.

Morrow leaped one way, then the opposite as the Sheriff groped for him. Alden turned toward a rattle at the stove as he heard Slade's head crunch against the wall under Harris' savage thrust.

"Down him!" Waddles roared. "Tear him down! Tear him down! I'm holding the door."

From the corner by the stove an iron pot hurtled across the room for the sound of the voice and crashed against the wall a foot from his head. A second kettle struck Alden in the chest, and he went down. Waddles saw the light vanish from the window, then reappear. Morrow had made a headlong dive through the little opening.

Waddles swung back the door and sprang outside as Morrow vaulted to the saddle. The big man lunged and tackled both horse and man as a grizzly would seek to batter down his prey.

The frightened horse struck at him, numbing one leg with the blow of an iron-shod forefoot, then reared and wheeled away from the thing which sprang at him, but Waddles retained his grip in the animal's mane, his other hand clamped on Morrow's ankle.

The rider leaned and struck him in the head. The crazed horse shook Waddles off, but as he fell, the other man fell with him, dragged from the saddle by the jerk of one mighty hand. They rolled apart, and Morrow leaped to his feet, but Waddles had wrenched the leg already numbed by the striking horse and it buckled under him and let him back to the ground as he put his weight on it.

Waddles promptly reached for his gun. A form loomed above him, a heavy rock upraised in both hands. The gun barked just as a downward sweep of the arms started the rock for his head. Morrow pitched down across him.

Waddles freed himself, rose and was stirring the limp shape with his toe as the Sheriff reached his side. (Continued on page 96)

The Iron Horse

Illustrated by
J. E. Allen



By
Bella Cohen

DAVID turned his eyes away lest he betray his envy. He heard the "gang" around him shout: "Speed 'er up!" "Man o' War!" "She's a baby!" "Atta boy, Sharkey!"

Perforce he raised his eyes in time to see the truck-horse which Sharkey, the leader of the "gang," was riding—*clup-clup*—by, its unwieldy body seeming to quiver with unaccustomed excitement. It was unbridled, unshorn, and unkempt of mane and tail, with shaggy tufts of brown hair on the lower parts of its legs. The stocky, plodding creature had not galloped for a long while, but under the goading guidance of Sharkey's bare toes it responded with whole-souled enthusiasm in a noisy but spectacular flight through the crowded street.

The horse drew up with an ungraceful jerk in front of the admiring group of boys. Sharkey slid down from its moist, smelly back and patted it with a professional air. He felt the mute admiration always accorded him at the end of his exploits. Suddenly a great impulse generated in him.

"Any you fellas wanna ride 'er?"
There was a profound silence. Then:
"Lemme!"

The gang turned to look at David, for it was he who had spoken. "Aw, gwan, you can't ride a horse!"

"Gee, yuh'd jus' about break yuh neck."
"Aincha got no sense?"

David sensed the pity in the voices of the gang, and his eager eyes grew sullen with thwarted desire.

"I kin so ride!" he protested thickly. "I kin so. Gimme a boost, an' I'll show yuh!"

The thin, pale lips were a faint line in the determined face.

One of the boys laughed. The other six followed, punching each other weakly at the idea of Skinny's riding! Sharkey alone did not laugh. He stood apart from the rest, vainly trying to suppress his grin, and failing, he thought it opportune for him to mount his steed again and guide it back to the stable in the next block.

Their leader *clup-clupping* on his way without their send-off, the boys broke into a canter and followed in shouting pursuit.

David was alone, one iron-braced foot an inch above the ground.

The crutches at his armpits hunched up the thin shoulders, from which the fine dark head rose unconquerable.

But back in the rear of the hallway, where he often played by

himself tracing the shadows on the wet, lumpish green wall. David stretched himself out on the floor and cried into his cap. He did not want anyone to hear him.

(The gang had not meant to be cruel—but what could it do with a guy that couldn't play Cops an' Robbers? Couldn't throw a ball? Couldn't punch another guy? Couldn't do nuthin' but shoot marbles an' play Buzz? Sissy games! Gee!)

David silently commenced his supper of bread and herring and weak tea, eating very slowly. His two older brothers, one of whom was a messenger boy, and wore a uniform, ate their suppers noisily, gobbling their food. The two girls—they were younger than David—neatly placed their herring between two uneven slices of bread and ate contentedly. They always made sandwiches of their food.

The new tenant from the fourth floor came in to ask why the ceiling leaked, even when it didn't rain. David's mother,

"If he hadn't gone on that bridge,—burned it should only be,—and if he hadn't played with that wild Yenta! Why didn't the good God stop her hands? For didn't she push him over to see the wagon that was filled with toys? Oh, God should only give me strength to bear it! If it only hadn't been—"

David had heard his mother say all this many times before. Now she would tell how her husband had left her:

"On a morning, he took his clarinet and said he'd come back for dinner. He was going to play in the yards on Clinton Street. He took Davy with him like he always did, because Davy could collect the pennies for him. About dinner-time a boy brought Davy home. But I never saw Pincus again from that day to this. A man that could leave me with a family of five like this, they ought to shoot down like a dog in the street, I say."

(David's mother did not mean to be cruel. How could she, witless woman, know that each time she told of David's accident,



the wounds bled afresh! How could she, garrulous creature, understand that in David's mind, his father's disappearance was something for which

he felt himself to blame? How could she, with all her troubles, be expected to remember her husband's usual greeting to the little boy: "Come here, my son with the iron feet, and clear your father's clarinet"?)

When David returned from the street, where he'd been trying to count the stars and forget the horse he'd wanted to ride, his little sisters were already asleep on the mattress on the floor. They had left his place on the outer edge for him. He slept there, so that he could crawl out upon the floor when they proved restless. . . .

The new boarder for whom the front room had been scrubbed came the next week. He came in the gray of morning, and of all the children on the block, David alone was up. He came riding on an express wagon—an old, bent, beardless man with white, overhanging eyebrows and fretful mouth. The blue-veined, bony hand clawing the cane, trembled with a steady rhythm.

David's eyes traveled from the hand to the face and then to the back of the van.

A boarder who moved with an express wagon! Davy had never seen or heard of such a thing.

As a matter of fact, the old man had all his belongings stuffed in his pockets and in a small bundle he carried in the crook of his arm.

as janitress, apologized volubly for the landlord. It was strange how much voice had been left this

woe-racked, weary woman. And when she talked,—no matter what it was she was saying,—her eyes shone with a peculiar glitter and her lips quivered with animation.

David, finishing his food, slid down from his chair and reached for his crutches. The new tenant, a plump, small-eyed midwife, watched him.

As he swung himself out into the hall, he heard his mother explain:

David hobbled over to the rear of the van, just as one of the expressmen jumped to the street and adjusted a set of planks between the sidewalk and the tailboard, while the other shouted:

"Ready, there? Hey, this aint a wedding. Shove 'er down."

And then the old man's sole relic of his harness-making days rolled down the planks upon its four legs, its neck arched high, its brown glass eyes gazing off into the morning mist of the streets beyond. David, agape, moved nearer, his eyes hazy with astonishment. Something within him began knocking painfully—joyously. A horse! Not a horse like Sharkey's, but a grayish-white one with a long tail that almost touched the ground. It stood there alertly motionless, just as it had stood in front of the old man's store so long ago.

To David, though, it was as alive as the brown truck-horse that Sharkey had ridden, and a hundredfold more graceful. Its legs tapered. Its eyes were gentle. Its tail and mane were combed into smooth strands.

"My horse!" David told himself exultantly. "My horse!"

As if in complete possession of his thought, the old man lifted his stick warningly.

"Here, you youngster, when that horse goes down the cellar, you keep away from it. If you don't, I'll break every bone—"

"Shah!" commented David's mother, who had been listening with the bitter light in her eyes deepening steadily. "Shah—you have already talked enough. Can't you see that my child could no more climb the back of that horse than he could ride it! Look, for yourself—his feet—"

The old man murmured something and ended by presenting David with a penny.

DAVID looked up and down the block to see if any other children had watched the arrival of the iron horse (it was sheathed with a sort of tin). No one, apparently, had seen. He smiled. When he smiled, his face wrinkled up like that of a yellow apple which has lain too long in the sun. His mother observed him anxiously for a moment. His brown eyes seemed so queer, so unnaturally big. Shaking her head, she directed the expressmen to the cellar where the horse was to be stabled.

David followed, a retinue in himself, slyly stroking the animal's tail with a timid hand.

He did not go down, but watched the horse slide along the planks that the men set under its rollers. He could hear his mother giving directions.

"Number Five is the best one. Put it in there. A horse, I needed! An iron horse, I needed! But it's not such a high horse, after all. I thought to myself it would touch the ceiling. But who wants a horse? I haven't got trouble enough already!"

The gruff grumble of the expressmen cut in here, but David was not listening. His mind was busy with ways and means of procuring matches, for his later trip downstairs alone. His intention was fully formed. He would first go down by himself and try to ascend the horse by some means. He did not doubt for a moment that he could. Then when he had mastered that preliminary, he would call Sharkey and the gang and show them that he too could ride a horse! He was certain that with proper encouragement the old man's horse would move. Of course, it needed peculiar encouragement, such as only very few knew how to give—such, for instance, as David alone knew how to give.

On the street, later, Sharkey paused to greet David with the news that maybe there was going to be a bottle fight between Cannon Street and the block. But David failed to appear interested in his usual appreciative way. He said nothing.

"What's a matter widjuh, Skinny?" Sharkey asked solicitously.

"Nuthin'," replied Skinny, self-consciously.

"Who yuh kiddin'?" persisted Sharkey.

"Aw, nuthin'," answered Skinny. Then slowly: "I—I gotta secret!"

"A secret!" repeated Sharkey.

David nodded.

"I'll tell yuh about it after dinner." (*Bread and herring.*)

"What's it about?"

David pondered. Should he tell? Wouldn't telling a little bit spoil the big secret?

Sharkey suddenly made as if to go away.

"It's about a horse, Sharkey!"

"Yer nutty!"

"Yuh'll see. Come around after dinner—about three o'clock. My mother, she's gawn away, an' I'll show yuh. Yuh kin bring the gang."

It was a long sentence for David, and he drew a deep breath. Sharkey screwed his mouth up in the manner of the incredulous,

but looking at David's shining face, he thought better of it and invited him to share a glass of soda water at the corner stand.

David accepted eagerly. Already, Sharkey was treating him as an equal. Sharkey left him at the corner to go on his own mysterious way, and David returned to the house. This was his mother's cleaning day. She was at that moment, in fact, climbing to the fifth floor. Like other janitors, she always started from the top and worked her way down. Here was his chance.

He opened the door that led to the cellar stairs. When he had with difficulty descended two of the wooden steps, he closed the door behind him and lit a candle-stump, first placing it on the stairs. Guided as he was by his own eagerness, he hardly required the light. He came, finally, to the foot of the stairs. He opened the door of Number Five storeroom slowly. Maybe he'd only dreamed about a horse! But no, it was there, not so tall that it touched the ceiling, as his mother had noted, but tall enough to impress the boy with the impossibility of ever ascending to its back.

The sickly ray of light that filtered down from the candle wavered for a moment and then assumed a more concentrated radiance. Then it was that David found means of winning success for his plan. A chair! He placed it with painful difficulty against the wall facing the back of the horse. Once on the chair, he dropped his crutches and drew himself up—warily, by the long tail of the horse. He pulled himself up—up, up; and then his hand reached out for the mane. It was not so silky as it appeared, but it was very strong and serviceably tough—like the tail.

Once astride the back of the horse, he closed his eyes and pressed his iron-braced legs against the sides. Then he lowered his head until it lay between the horse's upstanding ears and whispered.

"Yer a dandy horse, aincha? Didjuh evuh know Sharkey's horse? He aint so nice. He's brown an' funny-lookin'. Yer like silvuh an' yer so cool! Funny, I got up! I gotta hurry, 'cause I aint got only a little piece o' candle and I gotta save it for Sharkey an' the gang. They're gonna watch us ride. You an' me! Le's see yuh try! Jus' slow, first; then yuh can run a little fast, but first, slow. Eh, eh—yuh son-of-a-gun!"

It was the highest praise David could have given the horse, since it was Sharkey's favorite form of approbation.

"Aincha gonna ride? Now, Silvuh, aincha gonna ride? Ah'll bring yuh a piece o' candy. I gotta penny, an' Ah'll bring yuh a piece o' candy."

Perhaps it was this bribe; perhaps it was something quite different; but Davy felt himself riding. Yet it was more like floating than riding. His head seemed to go one way—it seemed to go up; but the rest of him seemed to be going down—down—down. For a moment he gave himself wholly to the sensation, and then he forced his eyes open. The back of his head felt a little queer, but he was steady enough to slide down to the chair, seated, as he had planned. He picked up his crutches and with a look of love, not unmixed with the pride of possession, he called out cheerily:

"I aint forgettin' the candy. See, here's the penny!"

He managed to get up the stairs and rescue the remaining bit of candle. He still had two matches in his pocket. He felt very tired—much more tired than he thought he would be, and his head was still going up and up as if he were still riding on Silver's back, but without the ecstasy.

On the landing he paused to rest.

OUT on the sun-scorched stoop, Sharkey met him and silently offered him the good part of a squashy banana. "Like if I was a reg'lar guy!" David thought, and his heart grew large within him.

"I tol' the gang about yuh." Sharkey spoke with the air of a statesman discussing an important step. "They're gonna come in 'bout two hours. I tol' 'em not to come b'fore it's t'ree. An' they wont come b'fore they get the signal. Wot's it to be?"

Sharkey spat carelessly in the direction of the banana peel lying innocently near the curb. He was showing too much interest, he felt—quite too much.

He paused.

"Ah'll see you again at t'ree. Yeh?" he asked finally.

"Ah'll give you the sign," David promised eagerly. To have his idol say to him, "Ah'll see you at t'ree," in that fraternal way, as man to man, not as whole-bodied boy to him! For a moment, he could not think of the sign. His mind swam in passionate gratitude. "The sign'll be, if I wear my hat on my head, it's no good—my mother, she aint gawn away. If I don't wear no hat on my head, then this is the scheme."

She's my girl and I'm her beau
Else she'd not be blushing so.
We will marry, live so gay
And have our Campbell's every day!



The big moment!

The first impression tells the story. Begin with a hearty plateful of Campbell's Ox Tail Soup and see what a glow of satisfaction goes round the table. Your guests will know there's a real dinner coming when you start with

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It is made from selected ox tails of medium size—the best size for making soup. The sliced joints and rich strengthening broth are blended with snow-white celery, Chantenay carrots and golden turnips, choice barley, tasty leeks—just a touch of these—and delicious flavoring.

21 kinds

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Campbell's SOUPS

LOOK FOR THE RED AND WHITE LABEL

Sharkey was to wait until half-past three before he brought the gang down to the cellar to see the horse.

"A live horse?" queried Sharkey.

David hesitated. He felt that if he said too much, something dire would befall.

"N-no—but it rides."

"Yer looney!"

"I ain' not. It's—it's a horse wot's made from iron. It's stronger than a live horse; an' hones', it rides!" David warmed up to his description as the lines of cynical incredulity deepened in the older boy's face. "It's got a white tail an' white hair on its head, big white hair. It touches the ceiling, nealy. An' it rides. It rides swift—swifter—swift—er'n anything."

To all this, Sharkey seemed to be paying a deaf ear.

Then David in desperation cried out:

"You'll see! You'll see. Yuh bring the gang along. But don't yuh make no noise."

Sharkey unbent sufficiently to perfect the plan which Davy had so roughly suggested. Sharkey was a master at planning.

The two parted; and Davy, after buying a peanut bar for his penny to give to Silver, returned to the house. His mother was wringing the mop at the sink. She patted David roughly on the head with a wet, puffy hand.

"Here—here is bread an' herring," she said, handing him the food. "Go out in the yard and eat. Don't go way from the house."

AT three o'clock David lifted himself from the ground and tapped his way into his home. His mother was gone. His little sisters were playing house with a doll made out of a bent fork and some pink paper. He hurried back to the front, cap in hand. Sharkey was waiting as arranged, and in important silence nodded his head, held up four fingers, the middle one bent, and then began to run.

Davy hurried back, trying valiantly to imitate the smooth evidence of haste that his hero had exhibited. His crutches were a little bumpy, and he himself felt very tired, more tired than on any other day that he could remember. His head felt heavy, and his eyes burned. But he valiantly got out his bit of candle and matches and prepared to repeat the feat of the morning.

It was a little more difficult now, but he finally achieved the foot of the wooden stairs and the heart of the musty, choking smell. Cautiously he opened the door of Number Five, assailed by the fear of the horse having vanished in his absence. But it was still there, its eyes still gazing off blankly in aristocratic disregard of its squalid surroundings. Davy looked up at it fondly, rubbing its feet shyly. His heart seemed to swell and swell until he thought he could stand it no longer.

"Silvuh," he cried, tightly embracing a rigid leg, "Silvuh, I—I love yuh!"

Overcome by his own temerity, he shut his eyes. It left him faint. He hastened his preparations for hoisting himself to the back of the horse. In a relatively short time they were accomplished. Again on Silver, the breath-

less ecstasy of the forenoon seized him, and he bent his head to the horse's mane.

"Silvuh," he murmured, "Sharkey an' the gang is comin'. Sharkey don' b'lieve yuh kin ride. An' we gotta show Sharkey. He's *some* fella! He's the leader of the whole block!"

The horse seemed to understand, for Davy felt himself riding—riding through the sunlit clouds and rainbow-colored vistas.

"Silv'," he faltered thickly, lovingly, "Silv', yuh son-of-a-gun!"

And then everything, the blue, metallic candle-rays, the cobwebbed rafters, even the horse itself, faded from David's consciousness down a long, long road. All he knew was that he was riding—riding—somewhere. . . . The sunlit clouds and rainbow-colored vistas were a deep, deepening purple . . . almost black . . . quite black.

"COME on there, fellas!" commanded Sharkey in a harsh whisper. "Get a move on yuh!"

There was an answering titter at his back, and the gang began to move after Sharkey's advancing figure. Who would not have laughed in the expectation of seeing such a miracle as a little crippled boy riding on the back of an iron horse? It was the derision of the incredulous.

"Here, Nigger, light the candle. This one's all out."

Sharkey gave his orders in the manner of one who has never yet been disobeyed. The candle sputtered into blue flame and was set down on the topmost step by the last boy in the line. At the foot of the stairs, the gang paused and of one accord drew deep breaths. Swiftly their hands went up to their noses.

"Gas!"

It was Nigger who cried out what the others were too frightened to utter. Before Sharkey could make any reply, Reddy Fink, whose eyes were never still, grasped the arm of the leader with a grip that could not be shaken off.

"Looka, looka! Sharkey! It's Skinny! An' he's on top of the horse. He's asleep! He's asleep!"

"I'm gawn back. I ain' gonna stay here. I'm afraid. It's gas!" Nigger whimpered.

"Yuh stay right here, yuh little skunk, till I wake up Skinny," commanded Sharkey; and Nigger stayed, a blubbing, pale-faced little boy, with one hand pressed tightly over his nose and mouth.

"Skinny—Skinny!" whispered Sharkey, patting the inert figure on the horse. "Skinny! Wake up!"

THERE was neither answer nor movement.

"Skinny!" Sharkey's voice rose to a hoarse shout. "Skinny, don't yuh hear me? It's me, Sharkey! Wake up. I say!"

David slept on.

"Ahm gawn up! It smells gas sumpin' terrible!" Nigger whined again. "I don' wanna die!"

At the word, the gang made a sudden rush for the stairs.

"Say, fellas!"

Sharkey's voice was sepulchral to the group that halted for their leader.

"Somebody yell fer Skinny's ma! Wait a minute—yell fer a p'liceman, or a amb'lance. Yell fer somebody!"

The leaderless gang rushed up and out, their hands over their mouths.

Sharkey's urging voice rose to a thin, muffled whine. He began to cry. With the tears running into his open mouth, he tried to pull David from his high seat. But the hands were tightly clenched in the horse's mane. Sharkey managed to cut the hair away from the hands with a knife that he had only yesterday stolen from a bullying younger lad.

He worked fast and strenuously, and at length had David bent limp across his shoulders.

Why didn't somebody come? Where was the ambulance?

Sharkey had begun to climb the stairs, bent beneath his burden, just as Davy's mother, a policeman and the figures of divers neighbors and children blocked the doorway. They lifted his burden then and hastily shut the door of the cellar, leaving a man to guard it.

The gas had even permeated the hall and the upper stairways, so that the house teemed with commotion, chattering, tears, curses, sighs, shuffling feet, crying children.

BUT David heard nothing as he lay on the new boarder's bed. His eyes were tight shut, and he smiled.

"Look. He moves not!" his mother appealed to those about her. "Why do you stand there, women, and do nothing? Put vinegar on him! Rub his hands. Men, don't stand and look at me! Go into the streets. Get a doctor. God, you have punished me enough. Give me my boy alive! He's sleeping, they say. He's sleeping."

She pressed her cheek against Davy's iron braces. Women cried noisily, with slobbering sounds. Men groaned and their hearts felt boxed in.

Then the frightening, zig-zag clang of an ambulance.

The white-clad young doctor touched the blue face and hands. He ordered the gaping crowd out of the house and then began to work over the little boy. He had brought the pulmotor with him, and with the aid of the chauffeur, he applied it. After three quarters of an hour, he was ready to give up.

"Go on! Go on!" some one shouted from a far corner of the room. It was Sharkey. He had hidden under the table. "Don't stand there like a nut. Go on—yuh tired? Ah'll help!"

So Sharkey helped. Another quarter of an hour.

"Let me in to my child. He's mine. I say, let me in!"

David's mother banged on the door with her fists. The doctor and his assistant exchanged glances behind Sharkey's back.

"Lookit, lookit! He's—he's sayin' sumpin'!" cried out Sharkey triumphantly. His face was covered with sweat and tear-streaks, and his hair hung down into his eyes. "Lookit!"

Sharkey bent close to the lips that seemed to move for him alone.

"Sharkey . . . I'm ridin' . . . Tell the gang . . . I'm ridin'," they whispered. "I'm ridin' . . . ridin' . . . ridin'!"

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—How you can rouse it



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But your skin itself must have special care, if you wish it to show all the beauty and charm of which it is capable. Your skin is a separate organ of your body. Neglect of its special needs may result in an unattractive complexion, even though your general health is good.

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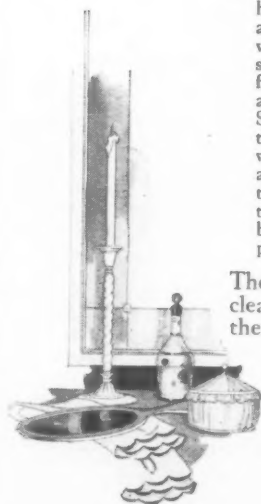
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For
HALITOSIS
use
LISTERINE



THE SETTLING OF THE SAGE

(Continued from page 89)

"Dead bird!" Waddles announced, and turned to limp back to the cabin.

A match flared inside as Harris lighted the lantern. Carpenter stirred and sat up, moving one hand along the gash in his scalp. The Sheriff stooped and snapped a pair of handcuffs on Slade's wrists. They splashed water on his face, and he opened his eyes. He regarded the steel bracelets at his wrists as he was helped to his feet, and turned to Harris.

"Don't forget that I'll kill you for this," he said. It was a simple statement, made without heat or bluster, and aside from this one remark, he failed to speak a syllable until Sheriff Alden rode away with him.

The Sheriff waved the lantern outside the door, and before he lowered it, two deputies rode up, leading his horse.

"We started at that shot," one of them announced in explanation of their prompt arrival.

Alden motioned Slade to his horse and helped him up.

"Shoot him out of the saddle if he makes a break," he ordered briefly.

"Now you can move against those men I've sworn out complaints for," Harris said to Alden. "Public sentiment has turned against them to such an extent that they won't get any help—and there won't be any to fill their places, once we've cleaned them up. Deputize the whole Three Bar crew when you're ready to start."

The Sheriff nodded and led the way with the two deputies riding close behind, one riding on either side of Slade.

CHAPTER XIV

THE freight wagons rattled away from the Three Bar as the first light showed in the east, and the grind of wheels on gravel died out in the distance as Harris and Billie finished breakfast.

They walked to the mouth of the lane and watched the light driving the shadows from the valleys. A score of times they had stood so, never tiring of the view afforded from this spot, a view which spoke of Three Bar progress and future prosperity. The hands had come in from the round-up the night before, prior to the return of Harris and Waddles from their mysterious two-day trip in response to the Sheriff's message, and Evans had led them to Brill's for a night of play. They were due back at the ranch in the early forenoon, and Harris had allowed the freighters to depart before the others arrived.

"We'll be short of guards for the next hour or two," he said, "till the boys get back from Brill's—but they'll be rocking in most any time now."

"What did Alden want?" she asked, referring to the trip from which he and Waddles had returned late the night before.

"We made a call on Carp," he said. "He had some good news we've been waiting for."

"Then Carp is a Three Bar plant?" she said.

"He's a U. S. plant," Harris corrected. "But he's been working in with us to get something on Slade—to gather proof that he's behind these squatter raids of the last few years and the ones they've aimed at us up to date. He couldn't get a shred that would hold in court. But Slade is almost through. His claws are clipped."

The girl started to question him as to Carp's activities, but after the first sentence she became aware that his attention was riveted on something other than her words. He had thrown up his head like a startled buck and was peering down the valley.

Her range-bred ears caught and correctly interpreted the sound which had roused him. A distant rumble reached her, and the surface of the earth seemed to vibrate faintly beneath her feet. She knew the jar for the pounding of thousands of hoofs, the drone for the far-off bawling of frightened cows. A low black line filled the valley from side to side, rushing straight on up the gently sloping bottoms for the Three Bar flat.

"They're on us," Harris said. "I might have known. Get back to the house—quick!"

As they ran, she noticed that his eyes were not upon the surging mass of cows in the valley, but were trained on the broken slopes back of the house.

"Anyway, they don't want you," he said. "We'll do the best we can."

Waddles stood in the door of the cook-house, his big face flushed with wrath as he gazed at the oncoming sea of cows. He reached up and took the shotgun which reposed on two pegs above the door.

He slammed the heavy door and dropped the bar as they sprang inside.

"I made that prediction about clipping Slade's claws too soon," Harris said. "What with Slade locked up and Morrow six feet underground, I was overconfident. I might have known it was planned ahead."

The front rank of the stampede was bearing down on the lower fence. The barrier went down like so much spider-web before the drive, posts broke short, wire snapped and dragged, and three thousand head of cows pounded on across the meadows.

THE girl had a sickening realization that the work of a year would be blotted out in a space of seconds under those churning hoofs. It seemed that she must die of sheer grief as she witnessed the complete devastation of the fields she had watched day by day with such loving care. The stampede swept the full length of the meadow and held on for the house. The acute stab of her grief was dulled and replaced by a mental lethargy. The worst had happened, and she viewed the rest of the scene with something akin to indifference.

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which went down with a splintering crash under the pressure from behind. She looked out on a sea of tossing horns and heaving backs as the herd rushed through, the heavy log building shaking from the mass of animals jammed against them and squeezing past.

The force of the run was spent on the steep slope back of the house, and the herd split into detachments and moved off through the hills.

The west side of the house was windowless, a blank wall built against the prevailing winds. Waddles was busily engaged in knocking out a patch of chinking and endeavoring to work a loophole between the logs. Harris was similarly occupied between two windows which overlooked the blacksmith shop, store-rooms and saddle-room, which formed a solid line of buildings a hundred yards to the east. She reflected hazily that there was little cause for such petty activity when the worst had happened and the Three Bar had suffered an irreparable loss.

Harris pointed down the valley to the south, and she turned mechanically and crossed to that window. A few riders showed on the ridges on either flank of the valley.

"They were cached up there to pick us off if we rode down to try and turn the run," he said. "If it had been light, they might have opened on the wagons."

She nodded without apparent interest. What might transpire now seemed a matter to be viewed with indifference.

"It's time for me to go," Harris said.

"I'll hold the bunk-house. Good luck, Billie—we'll hold 'em off."

He turned to Waddles, who still worked to make a loophole through the blank wall.

"If it gets too hot, put her outside and tell her to give herself up. Even Lang would know that the whole country would be hunting them tomorrow if they touched her. They won't if they can help it. But this is their last hope—to trust in one final raid. They'll go through with it. Make her go outside if it comes to that."

He opened the door and leaped across the twenty yards of open space which separated the main building from the bunk-house. The fact that no rifle-balls searched for him as he sprang inside was sufficient testimony that the raiders who might be posted in the hills back of the house were not yet within easy range. He barred the door and looked from the south window. The riders along the valley rims had descended to the bottoms. Smoke was already rising from one homestead cabin, and they were riding toward the rest. Two men had dismounted by the headgate.

Harris cursed himself for not having anticipated this very thing. The whole plan was clear to him. Slade would have known of the implements at the railroad waiting to be freighted in. He would have known, too, that when the cowhands came in from the round-up, there would follow the inevitable night at Brill's. Morrow had mapped out the raid long in

advance, engaging Lang to gather the cows throughout the first night the round-up crew was in from the range and hold them a few miles from the ranch. In case the freighters failed to leave before the others came back from Brill's, the raid would have been staged just the same—with men cached along the lip of the valley to pick off all those who should attempt to ride down and turn the run, and others ready to slip down from behind and torch the buildings while the fight was going on in the flat. Lang could not know that Slade was locked up and that Morrow was dead, and so the raid had gone through as planned.

He turned to the opposite side and scanned the face of the hills for signs of life. Not a sage quivered to show the position of bodies crawling through the brush; no rattle of gravel indicated the presence of men working down through any of the sheltered coulees behind; yet he knew they were near at hand. Harris transferred his attention to the long line of log buildings a hundred yards to the east. The row afforded perfect cover for any who chose that route of approach. They could walk up to them in absolute safety, screened both from himself and those in the main house.

As he watched the doors and windows for sign of movement within, a voice hailed them from the shop.

"You might as well come out," it called. "We're going to fire the plant."

HARRIS stretched prone on the floor and placed the muzzle of his rifle in a crack between the logs. It was hard shooting. He was forced to shift the butt end of the gun, moving with it himself to line the sights instead of swinging the free end of the barrel. He trained it on a crack some two feet from the door of the shop. Behind the aperture the light of a window on the far side showed faintly.

"Come out!" the voice ordered. "Or we'll cook you inside. We've no time to lose. Rush it!"

The light disappeared from the crack, and Harris pressed the trigger. With the roar of his gun, a shape pitched down across the door of the shop. Some unseen hands caught the man by the feet, and as he was dragged back from sight, Harris saw the red handkerchief which had served as a mask.

From all along the row of buildings a fire was opened on the bunk-house. Apparently one man was detailed to search out a certain crevice between the logs. Harris threw himself flat against the lower log, which barely shielded him. One rifleman covered a crack breast-high, another the one next below, drilling it at six inch intervals. Shreds of 'dobe chinking littered the room. The balls which found an entrance splintered through the bunks and buried themselves in the logs of the far wall. A third marksman worked on the lower crack. Puffs of 'dobe pulverized before Harris' eyes as the systematic fire crept toward him down the crack in six-inch steps.

A flash of dust a few inches before his nose half blinded him. The next shot drilled through an inch above his head, flattened sidewise on the floor, and a fragment of shell-jacket, stripped in passing



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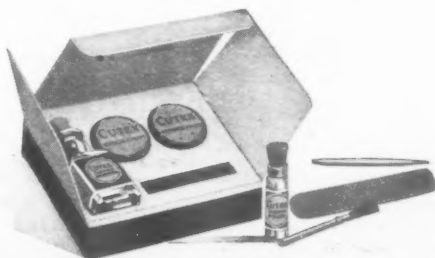
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through, scored his cheek and nicked his ear. The next fanned his shirt across the shoulders, and the biting scraps of 'dobe stung his back.

The shooting suddenly ceased. Billie Warren, dazedly indifferent as to what should happen to the Three Bar since the wreck of the lower field, had roused to action the instant she saw the spurts of chinking fly from the cracks of the bunk-house before the fusilade sent after Harris. She threw open the door and stepped out, holding up one hand.

"Don't kill him!" she commanded. "If you fire another shot at him, I'll put up every dollar I own to hang every man that ever rode a foot with Lang! Do you hear that, Lang?"

"Lang's in Idaho," a voice growled surlily from the shop. "None of us ever rode with Lang. We're from every brand on the range—and we're going to burn you squatters out."

"Draw off and let us ride away," she said. "You can have the Three Bar."

"All but Harris," the voice called back. "He stays!"

She threw up the rifle she carried and touched it off at a crack near the shop-door. As the splinters flew from the edge of the log a figure sprang past the door for the safety of the opposite side, and she shot again, then emptied the magazine at a crevice on the side where he had taken refuge.

"Get back inside, damn you!" a voice shouted. "We're going to wreck the Three Bar—and you with it, if you stand in the way. Get back out of line!"

Harris knew that the men would not be deterred in their purpose—would sacrifice her along with the rest, if necessary to accomplish their end.

"Get back, Billie," he called from the bunk-house. "You can't do us any good out there. Take the little cabin and sit tight. We'll beat them off."

A haze of smoke showed through the storeroom door; a bright tongue of flame leaped back of it.

She turned to the door, but Waddles had barred it behind her.

"Take the little house, Pet," he urged. "like Cal said. You'll be safe enough. We'll give 'em hell."

SHE walked to the little cabin that stood isolated and alone, the first building ever erected on the Three Bar, the house which had sheltered the Harrises before her father had taken over the brand.

The smoke had spread all along the row of buildings and hung in an oily black cloud above them, the hungry flames licking up the sides of the dry logs. The men had withdrawn after putting the torch to the row in a dozen spots.

From her point of vantage she saw two masked men rise from the brush and run swiftly down toward the main house, each carrying a can. She divined their purpose instantly.

"Watch the west side!" she called. "The west side—quick."

The sound of Waddles's hand-ax ceased, and an instant later the roar of the shotgun sounded twice from within the house, followed by the cook's lament.

"Missed!" the big voice wailed. "Two minutes more, and I'd had a real hole."

The muffled crash of a rifle rolled steadily from the house as Waddles fired at the chinking in an effort to reach the two men outside. But they had accomplished their purpose and retreated, the house shielding them from Harris' field of view, and they kept on the same line, out of sight of the bunk-house, till they reached a deep coulee which afforded a safe route of retreat.

The row of buildings was a seething mass of flames rolling up into the black smoke. Flames hissed and licked up the blank wall of the main house, traveling along the logs on which the two masked raiders had thrown their cans of oil. The men outside had only to wait until the occupants were roasted out. A stiff wind held from the west, and once the house was in flames, they would drive down upon the bunk-house and fire it in turn. She knew Waddles would come out when it grew too hot. The raiders might let him go. It was Harris they waited for.

The girl ran across and pounded on the bunk-house door.

"Run for it," she begged. "Make a run for the brush! I'll keep between you and them. They won't shoot me. You can get to the brush. There's a chance that way."

"All right, old girl," Harris said. "In a minute, now. But you go back, Billie. Get back to the little house. As soon as it gets hot, I'll run for it. I've got ten minutes yet before I'm roasted out. I'll start as soon as you're inside the house."

"No. Start now!" she implored. The flames were sliding along one side of the house, and even now she could feel the heat of them fanned down upon the bunk-house by the wind. "Run, Cal," she entreated. "Run while you've got a chance." She leaned upon the door and beat on it with her fists.

"All right, Billie," he said. "I'll go. You stay right where you are as if you're talking to me."

She heard him cross the floor. He dropped from the window on the far side from the men. When he came in sight of them, he was running in long leaps for the brush, zigzagging in his flight. Their gaze had been riveted on the girl and he gained a flying start of thirty yards before a shot was fired. Then a half-dozen rifles spurted from two hundred yards up the slope, the balls passing him with nasty snaps. He reached the edge of the sage and plunged headlong between two rocks. Bullets reached for him, ripping through the tips of the sage above him, tossing up spurts of gravel on all sides and singing in ricochets from the rocks.

One raider, in his eagerness to secure a better view, incautiously exposed his head. He went down with a hole through his mask as a shot sounded from the main house. From the window, his big face red and dripping from the heat, Waddles pumped a rifle and covered Harris' flight as best he could, drilling the center of every sage that shook or quivered back of the house.

Two men turned their attention to the one who handicapped their chances of locating the crawling man, and poured their fire through the window. A soft-



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nose splintered the butt of the cook's rifle and tore a strip of meat from his arm as another fanned his cheek. He dropped to the floor and peered from a crack. The firing had suddenly ceased. He saw a hat moving up a coulee, a mere flash here and there above the sage as the owner of it ran. As he watched for the man to reappear, the roof of the whole string of buildings to the east caved with a hissing roar and belched sparks and debris high in the air.

The fire was filtering through the cracks and circling its hungry tongues inside. The smoke hurt his eyes, and the heat seemed to crack his skin. He crossed over to see if Harris was down; that would account for the sudden cessation of shooting from the hills back of the house.

The raiders in the lower field were riding swiftly for the far side of the valley. One man knelt near the headgate, then mounted and jumped his horse off after the rest. Waddles put the whole force of his lungs behind one mighty cheer.

FIFTY yards back in the brush Harris cautiously raised his head to determine the cause of this triumphant peal.

Far down along the rim of the valley, outlined against the sky, four mules were running like so many startled deer under the bite of the lash, and six men swayed and clung in the wagon that lurched behind. High above the crackle of the flames sounded Tiny's yelps, keen and clear, as he urged on the flying mules. Three men unloaded from the wagon as it came opposite the cluster of men riding far out across the flats. They opened a long-range fire at a thousand yards, while the others stayed with the wagon as it rocked on toward the burning ranch.

Billie was running to the brush at the spot where Harris had disappeared. He rose to meet her.

"Cal, you're not hurt?" she asked.

"Not a scratch," he said, "thanks to you!"

In her relief she grasped his arm and gave it a fierce little squeeze.

"Then it's all right," she said.

Waddles burst from the door of the burning house, his arms piled high with salvage.

"We'll save what we can," Harris said, and started for the house. As he ran, the valley rocked with a concussion which nearly threw him flat, and a column of fragments and trash rose a hundred feet above the spot where the headgate had been but a second past.

A dozen running horses flipped over the edge of the hill and plunged down toward the ranch. The men were back from Brill's. Tiny halted the mules on the lip of the valley, and the three men came down the slope on foot.

Harris held up his hand to halt the riders as they would have kept on past the house. He knew that the raiders stationed behind the ranch had long since reached their horses and were lost in the choppy hills.

The girl sat apart and watched them work. Her lethargy had returned. It seemed a small matter to rescue these trinkets when the Three Bar was a total wreck.

Harris spoke briefly to Evans, and the tall man nodded as he itemized the orders in his mind.

"Now I'll get her away from here," Harris said. "It's hell for her to just sit there and watch it burn."

He caught two of the saddled horses that had carried the men from Brill's and crossed over to where she sat.

"Let's ride down to the field," he said, "and see what's got to be done. I expect a week's work will repair that part of it, all right."

She gazed at him in amazement. He spoke of repairing the damage while the Three Bar burned before his eyes. But she rose and mounted the horse. He shortened her stirrup straps, and they rode off down what had once been the lane, the fence flattened by the rushing horde of cattle that had swept through.

The homestead cabins smoked, but still stood intact.

"Look!" he urged cheerfully. "Those logs were too green to burn. We wont even have to rebuild. They'll look a little charred round the edges, maybe, but otherwise as good as new."

Behind her sounded a gurgling roar as the roof of the main house fell, but Harris did not even look back.

"We can restring that fence in a right short while," he asserted. "We've lost one crop of oat-hay—which we didn't much need anyhow. That young alfalfa is too deep-rooted to be much hurt. Next spring it'll come out thick, a heavy stand of hay, and we'll cut a thousand tons."

They rode across fields trampled flat by thousands of churning hoofs and reached the spot where the headgate had been, a yawning hole at which the water sucked and tore. A section of the bank caved and was washed away. . . . Through it all he planned the work of reconstruction and the transformation which would be effected inside a year, while behind them the home ranch was ablaze. But his enthusiasm failed to touch her. For her, the Three Bar was wrecked, the old home gone, and her gaze kept straying back to the eddying black smoke-cloud at the foot of the hills.

"WE'RE only scratched," he said. "It wont matter in the end."

"This is the end," she dissented. "The Three Bar is done. You're a good partner, Cal. You've done your best. But the whole thing would only happen over again. Slade's too strong for us."

"Slade's thorough!" he asserted again. "He's locked up, and when he gets out, his hands will be tied. Inside of a month the law will be in the saddle for the first time in years."

He painted the future of the Three Bar as the foremost outfit within a hundred miles, but her mind was busy with a future so entirely different from the one he portrayed that she scarcely grasped his words.

Suddenly Harris rose and pointed, rousing her from her abstraction. Down in the valley below them filed a long line of dusty horsemen. Behind them came two men driving a pack-string carrying equipment for a long campaign.

"There is the law!" he said. "That's what I brought you here to see. It's what we've been waiting for."



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Your strength and vigor depend on what you eat

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It's the same with tobacco, too. Somebody smoking a fancy brand offers you his pouch, and just to be a good fellow you take a pipeful (feeling a little pang of conscience as you push the unfamiliar tobacco into your pet pipe). And you smoke it. It may be very good tobacco. Perhaps you can't even decide what, if anything, is the matter with it.

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She turned and looked behind her as her ear caught the thud of hoofs and jangle of equipment. The Three Bar men were just topping the ridge.

They had caught up a number of the horses released from the pasture lot by the stampede. Calico and her own little horse, Papoose, were among them. Waddles and Moore brought up the rear, with a pack-train loaded with bed-rolls.

Harris knew that action, not inaction, was the best outlet for her energies, temporarily smothered by the shock of the raid. It was not in her nature to sit with folded hands among the ruins of the ranch and patiently wait for news.

"I thought maybe you'd like to go," he said. "The jaunt will do you good."

She showed the first sign of interest she had evidenced.

"And we're going to the Breaks?"

"That's where," he said. "We'll order them to give up and stand trial. They won't. Then we'll clean them out."

The little band in the valley were drawing near. She recognized Carp, Bentley and another Slade man riding with the Sheriff at their head.

"What's Bentley doing there?" she asked.

"One of Carp's men," Harris said. "If any of them get away from us, Carp will hound them down. He wears the U. S. badge and won't be stopped by any feeling about crossing the Utah or Idaho lines. Rustling is of no interest to him. That's the Sheriff's job. But Carp will round them up for obstructing the homestead laws."

The Three Bar men came up and halted. Harris and the girl changed mounts and led their men down to join the file of riders below. As she rode, she speculated as to Carlos Deane's sensations if he could but know that she rode at the head of thirty men to raid the stronghold Harris had once pointed out to him from the rims.

FOR hours they traveled at a shuffling trot that covered the miles. It was well after sundown when they halted in a sheltered valley and camped. . . . An hour before sunrise they were again in the saddle.

They held a stiff trot, and in an hour out from camp they struck rough going, the choppy nature of the country announcing that they were in the edge of the Breaks. The horses slid down into cut-bank washes and bad-land cracks, following the bottoms to some feasible point of ascent in the opposite wall. Daylight found them twenty miles from camp, and the horses were breathing hard. They turned into a coulee threaded by a well-worn trail. Three miles along this Bentley turned to the right up a branching gulch with eight men. Another mile, and Carp led a similar detachment off to the left. Billie rode with the Sheriff and Harris at the head of the rest, holding to the beaten trail.

"They had hours the start of us," Harris said. "They'd catch up fresh horses on the range and keep on till they got in sometime in the night."

He motioned to Billie.

"You fall back," he said. The men had drawn their rifles from the scabbards. "They never did post a guard. It

wouldn't occur to Lang that such a force could be mustered and start out short of a month. If he thought so, they'd be out of here and scattered instead of having a lookout along the trail. But there's just a chance. So for a little piece you'd better bring up the rear."

She started to dissent, but the Sheriff seconded Harris' advice.

"You move along back, Billie," he said. He patted her shoulder and smiled. "I'm a-running this layout, and if you don't mind the old Sheriff, he'll have to picket you."

She nodded and pulled Papoose out of the trail till the others filed by, riding with Horne in rear of the rest.

Harris turned up a side pocket, and the men waited while he and the Sheriff climbed a ridge on foot to investigate. Harris motioned to the girl.

"Come along up where you can see," he said, and she followed them up the ridge. Two hundred yards from the horses they came out on a crest which afforded a view of the basin that sheltered Arnold's stockade.

From behind a sage-clump Harris trained his glasses on the group a mile out across the shallow basin. Smoke rose from the chimney of the main building. Two men stood before a tepee near the stockade. There were two other tents inside the structure, with a number of men moving about them. Three sat on the ground with their backs against the log walls of the main house. Thirty or more horses fed in a pasture lot, and a little band of eight or ten stood huddled together inside the stockade at the far end from the tents.

He handed his glasses to the girl.

"We'll be starting," he said. "By the time we get fixed, the rest will be closing in. You stay here and watch the whole thing."

"I'm going along," she said.

The Sheriff demurred.

"It will be dirty business down there, once we start," he said, "business for men; you're a better man than most of us, girl; but you surely didn't reckon that Cal and me would let you go careening down in gunshot of that hornet's nest."

"I'm as good a shot as there is in the hills," she said. "And it was my ranch they burned."

The Sheriff shoved back his hat and pushed his fingers through his mop of gray hair.

"Fact," he confessed, "every word. But there's swarms of men in this country—and such a damn scattering few of girls that we just can't take the risk. That's how it is. If you don't promise to stay out of it, we'll have to detail a couple of the boys to ride guard on you till it's over with."

She knew that the other men would back Harris and Alden in their verdict. She nodded and watched them turn back toward the horses. She wanted to lead her men down in a wild charge on the stockade, shooting into it as she rode, avenging the sack of the Three Bar in a smashing fight.

BUT there was nothing spectacular in the attack of Harris and the Sheriff. They went about it as if hunting vermin, cautiously and systematically, taking

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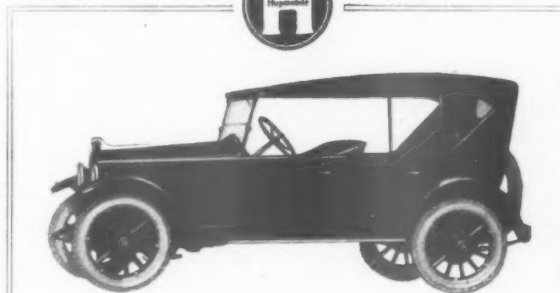
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every possible advantage of the enemy with the least possible risk to their men.

An hour after the two men had left her, she saw a figure off to the right. She trained the glasses on it, and saw that it was Alden moving toward the buildings. She swept the glasses round the edge of the circular basin. From all sides, from the mouth of every coulee that opened into it, dark specks were converging upon the stockade.

From her point of vantage it seemed that those round the buildings must see them as clearly as she did herself; but she knew they were keeping well out of sight, taking advantage of every concealing wave of ground and all inequalities of surface. The advance was slower as they closed in on the stockade. There was a sudden commotion among the men at the buildings. Some of the attacking force had been seen.

It was as if she gazed upon the activities of battling ants, the whole game spread out in the field of her glasses. There came a lull in the action, and she knew that the Sheriff had raised his voice to summon them to come out without their guns and go back as prisoners to stand trial.

Not a shot had been fired. One after another she picked up the men with her glasses. Occasionally one moved, hitching himself forward to some point which afforded a better view. One or two knelt in the bottom of shallow draws, peering from behind some sheltering bush. Inside the stockade, she could see Lang's men kneeling or flattened on the ground as they gazed through cracks in the walls.

SHE made out Harris, crouching in a draw. A thin haze of smoke spurted from his position. Three similar puffs showed along the face of the stockade. Then the sounds of shots drifted to her, faint snappy reports. Harris had dropped flat and shifted his position the instant he fired. A dozen shots answered the smoke-puffs along the stockade.

Throughout the next half-hour there was not a shot fired in the flat; no general bombardment, no wild shooting, but guerrilla warfare where every man held his fire for a definite human target. A man shifted his position in the stockade, raised to peer from a hole breast high, and she saw him pitch down on the ground before the sound of the shot reached her. One of her men had noted the darkening of the crack and had searched him out with a rifle-shot.

The thud of hoofs on the trail below drew her eyes that way. Waddles was riding out into the basin. He had brought the pack-string up to some point near at hand and deserted it to the care of the others while he rode on ahead to join in the fight. He was almost within gunshot of the place before he dismounted and allowed the horse to graze. She watched his progress as he covered the last half-mile on foot, his blue-and-white striped shirt identifying him clearly.

Waddles cautiously raised his head for a view of the stockade, and she could see the convulsive duck of his head as a rifle-ball tossed up a spurt of gravel round it. The man who had fired the shot went down as the Sheriff drilled the spot where a faint haze of smoke had shown.

She presently noted one of her men sitting under a sheltering bank and eating his lunch. She looked at her watch; it was after three—the day more than half gone, and less than a hundred shots had been fired. Five men were down in the stockade.

THE sun was sinking, and the higher points along the west edge of the basin were sending long shadows out across the flats before there was further action except for an occasional shifting of positions. Those remaining alive in the stockade were saddling the bunch of horses kept inside. These were led across under the fence on her side, where she could no longer see them.

The shadows lengthened rapidly, and her view through the glasses was beginning to blur when the gates of the stockade swung back and five horses dashed out, running at top speed under the urge of spurs. A rider leaned low upon the neck of each horse.

She saw one man lurch sidewise and slip to the ground; another straightened in the saddle, swung for two jumps, and slid off backwards across the rump of his mount. She saw the great striped bug which was Waddles rise to his knees in the path of a third. The rider veered his mount and swung from the saddle, clinging along the far side of the running horse. Then man and horse went down together, and neither rose. Waddles had shot straight through the horse and reached the mark on the other side. The shooting ceased when six shots had been fired. Four riderless horses were careening round the basin. Five hits out of six, she reflected—perhaps six straight hits.

The stockade was empty, leaving only those in the house to be accounted for. The dark specks in the brush were working closer to the house, effectually blocking escape. Then she could no longer make them out. The building showed only as a darker blot in the obscurity. A tiny point of light attracted her eye. It grew and spread. She knew that one of her men had crawled up under cover of night and fired the house. It was now but a question of minutes, but the sight oppressed her. She thought of the burning buildings on the Three Bar and rose to make her way to the pocket where the horses had been left in the care of a deputy.

"It will be over in an hour," she told the horse-guard.

All through the afternoon she had scarcely moved, and she was tired. The hours of inactivity had proved more wearing than a day in the saddle.

Presently Harris and the Sheriff came in with their detail. There were no prisoners.

"So they wouldn't give up even when they was burnt out!" the horse-guard commented. "I thought maybe a few would march out and surrender."

"I'd sort of hoped we'd have one or two left over so we could put on a trial," the Sheriff said. "There was three come out. But the light was poor, and all. Maybe they did aim to surrender. It's hard to say. But if they did—why, some of the Three Bar boys read the signs wrong. Anyway, there won't be any trial."

NEXT day the return-journey to the Three Bar was begun. The horses were tired and the back-trip was slow. They camped for the night twenty miles out from the ranch, and before noon of the next day the Sheriff and the marshals had split off with their men, leaving the Three Bar crew to ride the short intervening space to the ranch alone.

As she neared the edge of the Crazy Loop valley, the girl dreaded the first glimpse of the pillaged ranch. For the first time it occurred to her to wonder at the speed with which Harris had planned and executed the return raid while the Three Bar still burned.

"How did you get word to them all?" she asked. "Did you have it all planned before?"

"It was Carp," he said. "One of Lang's men rode down to inquire for Morrow and told Carp the cows were gathered for the run and held near the Three Bar. They figured Carp was a pal of Morrow's and all right. It was near morning then. Carp sent Bentley fanning for Coldriver to see if the Sheriff was back and to bring out the posse if he hadn't turned up. He started out for the Three Bar himself. The run was under way when he came in sight, so he cut over and headed the mule-teams at the forks and turned them back, then kept on after the boys at Brill's. Sent word to me by Evans to meet them where we did."

She did not hear the latter part of his explanation, for they had reached the edge of the valley and she looked down upon the ruins of her ranch.

"Now I'm ready to go," she said. "I'll go and see what Judge Colton wants."

"He wanted you to get away before anything like this occurred," Harris said. "I knew that maybe we'd have tough going for a while at some critical time, and wanted you to miss all of that—to come back and find the Three Bar booming along without having been through all the grief. So I wrote him to urge you to come."

"Well, I'm going now," she said. "I don't need to be urged."

Harris pointed as they rode down the slope. The little cabin that old Bill Harris had first erected on the Three Bar, and which had later sheltered the Warrens when they came into possession of the brand, stood solid and unharmed among the blackened ruins which hemmed it in on all sides.

"Look, girl!" he exclaimed triumphantly. "Look at that little house. The Three Bar was started with that! We have as much as our folks started with—and more. They even had to build that. We'll start where our folks did, and grow."

CHAPTER XV

HARRIS sat on a baggage truck and regarded the heap of luggage somberly. Way off in the distance, a dark blot of smoke marked the location of the onrushing train which would take the Three Bar girl away.

"Some day you'll be wanting to come back, old partner," he predicted hopefully.

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Billie shook her head. There is a certain relief which floods the heart when the worst has passed. Looking forward and anticipating the possible ruin of the Three Bar, she had thought such a contingency would end her interest in life, and she had resolutely refused to look beyond it into the future. Now that it was wrecked in reality, she found that she looked forward with faint interest to what the future held in store for her—that it was the past in which her interest was dead.

"Not dead, girl, only dormant," Harris said when she remarked upon this fact. "Like a seed in frozen ground! In the spring it will come to life and sprout. The Three Bar isn't hurt. We're in better shape than ever before, and a clear field out in front, for the country is cleaned up and the law is clamped on top."

She honestly tried to rouse a spark of interest deep within her, some ray of enthusiasm for the future of the Three Bar. But there was no response. She assured herself again that the old brand which had meant so much to her meant less than nothing now. That part of her was dead.

The trail of smoke was drawing near, and there was a rhythmic clicking along the rails. Harris leaned and kissed her.

"Just once for luck," he said, and slipped from his seat on the truck as the train roared in. It halted with a screech of brakes, and he handed her up the steps.

"Good-by, little fellow," he said. "I'll see you next round-up time."

As the train slid away from the station, she looked from her window and saw him riding up the single street on the big paint-horse. The train cleared the edge of the little town and passed the cattle-chute. A long white line through the sage marked the course of the Coldriver Trail. Three wagons, each drawn by four big mules, moved toward the cluster of buildings which comprised the town—the freighters on their way to haul out materials for the rebuilding of the ranch.

The work was going on, but she no longer had a share in it. She was looking ahead and planning a future in which the Three Bar played no part.

DEANE was with Judge Colton, her father's old friend, to meet her at the station. The news of the Three Bar fight had preceded her, and the press had given it to the world, including her part of it. As they rode toward the Colton home, she told the Judge she had come to stay, and Deane was content. After the strenuous days she had just passed through, she needed a long period of rest, he reflected; but the older man smiled when he suggested this.

"What she needs now is action," he said, "and no rest at all. If it was me, I'd try to wear her down instead of resting her up—keep her busy from first to last. Cal Warren's girl isn't the sit-around type."

Deane acted on this, and no day passed without his having planned a part of it to help fill her time. Her interest in the new life was genuine, and she was conscious of no active regret at part-

ing from the old. It was so different as to seem part of another world. The people she met, their mode of life, their manner of speech—all were foreign to the customs of the range. And this very dissimilarity kept her interest alive.

One evening in the early spring Billie sat in the Colton library waiting for Deane to come and take her to a lake-side clubhouse for the evening. Tiny leaves showed on the trees, and the lawn was a smooth velvet green.

Slade's words of the long ago recurred to her.

"A soft front lawn to range in," she quoted aloud.

Suddenly she longed to sit for just one evening before the fire and plan real work with Cal Harris. He had been the one man she had known who had asked that she work with him, instead of insisting that she work for him—or that he should work for her.

Judge Colton entered the room and interrupted her reverie by handing her a paper. In the first black headline she saw Slade's name, and Harris—an announcement of the last chapter of the Three Bar War.

The first line of the article stated that Slade, the cattle-king, had been released. There was insufficient proof to convict on any count. She felt a curious little shiver of fear for Harris, with Slade once more at large. The article retold the old tale of the fight, and portrayed Slade, on his release, viewing the range which he had once controlled and finding a squatter family on every available ranch-site.

She had a flash of sympathy for Slade as she thought his sensations must have been similar to her own when she had looked upon the ruins of the Three Bar. But this was blotted out by the knowledge that he had only met the same treatment he had handed to so many others, that he had dropped into the trap he had built for her. She found no sympathy for Slade—only fear for Harris, since Slade was freed. The old sense of responsibility for her brand had been worn too long to be shed at will. She knew that now.

"I suppose you'll be surprised to hear that I'm going back," she said.

Her father's old friend smiled at her. "Surprised!" he said. "Why, I've known all along you'd be going back before long. I could have told you that, when you stepped off the train."

He left her alone with Deane when the younger man arrived. She plunged into her subject at once.

"I'm sorry," she said, "but I'm going home. I'm not cut out for this—not for long at one time. In ten days they'll be rounding up the calves, and I'll have to be there. I want to smell the round-up fire, to throw my leg across a horse and ride, and feel the wind tearing past. I'm longing to watch the boys topping off bad ones in the big corral and jerking Three Bar steers. It will always be like that with me. So this is good-by."

FOUR days later, in the early evening, the stage pulled into Coldriver with a single passenger. The boys were in from a hundred miles around for one last spree before round-up time. As the

stage rolled down the single street, the festivities were in full swing. From one lighted doorway came the blare of a mechanical piano accompanied by the scrape of feet; the sound of drunken voices raised in song issued from the next; the shrill laughter of a dance-hall girl, the purr of the ivory ball and the soft clatter of chips, the ponies drowsing at the hitch-rails the full length of the street, the pealing yelp of some over-enthusiastic citizen whose night it was to howl—all these were evidences of the wide difference between her present surroundings and those of the last eight months. She gazed eagerly out of the stage window. It was good to get back.

Both the driver and the shotgun guard who rode beside him were new men on the job since she had left, and neither of them knew the identity of their passenger. As the stage neared the rambling log hotel, where she would put up for the night, a compact group of riders swung down the street. Her heart seemed to stop as she recognized the big paint-horse at their head. She had not fully realized how much she longed to see Cal Harris. As they swept past, she recognized man after man in the light that streamed from the doorways and dimly illuminated the wide street.

INSTEAD of dismounting in a group, they suddenly split up, as if at a signal, scattering the length of the block and dismounting singly. There was something purposeful in this act, and a vague apprehension superseded the rush of gladness she had experienced with the first unexpected view of the Three Bar crew. Men who stood on the board sidewalks turned hastily inside the open doors as they glimpsed the riders, spreading the news that the Three Bar had come to town. The driver pulled up in front of the one hotel.

"It'll come off right now," he said. "Slade's in town."

"Sure," the guard replied. "Why else would Harris ride in at night like this unless in answer to Slade's threat to shoot him down on sight? Get the girl inside."

The reason for the scattering was now clear to her. Slade, on his release, had announced that he would kill Harris on sight whenever he appeared in town. Slade had many friends. The Three Bar men were scattered the length of the street to enforce fair play.

The guard opened the door and motioned her out, but she shook her head.

"I'm going to stay here," she asserted.

Her answer informed him of the fact that she was no casual visitor but one who knew the signs and would insist on seeing it through. He nodded and shut the door.

Harris had dismounted at the far end of the block and was strolling slowly down the board sidewalk on the opposite side. Groups of men packed the doorways, each one striving to appear unconcerned, as if his presence there were an accident instead of being occasioned by knowledge that something of interest would soon transpire. A man she knew for a Slade rider moved out to the edge of the sidewalk across the street from Harris. She saw the lumbering form of Waddles edging up beside him. Other



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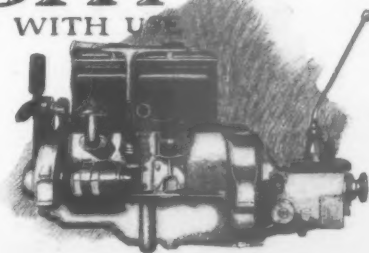
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Three Bar boys were watching every man who showed a disposition to detach himself from the groups in the doorways. The blare of the piano and all sounds of revelry had hushed.

The girl felt the clutch of stark fear at her heart. She had come too late. Harris was to meet Slade. It seemed that she must die with him if he should pass out before she could speak to him again and tell him she was back. She had a wild desire to run to him—at least to lean from the window and call out to him to mount Calico and ride away. But she knew he would not. She was frontier bred. Even the knowledge that she was in town might unsteady him now. She sat without a move, and the driver and guard outside supposed her merely a curious onlooker interested in the scene.

"A hundred on Harris," the driver offered.

The guard grunted a refusal.

"I'd bet that way myself," he said.

From this she knew that the two men were hoping Harris would be the one to survive; but the fact that their proffered bets backed their sentiments was no proof that they felt the conviction of their desire. She knew the men of their breed. No matter how small the chance, their money would inevitably be laid on the side of their wishes, never against them, as if the wagering of a long shot was proof of their confidence and might in some way exercise a favorable influence on the outcome. No man had ever stood against Slade. She noted Harris' gun. He carried it with the same awkward sling as of old, on the left side in front, with the butt to the right.

"Fifty on Slade," a voice offered from the doorway of the hotel. The guard started for the spot, but the bet was snapped up by another. Wild fighting rage swept through her at the thought that to all these men it was but a sporting event.

HER eyes never once left Harris as he came down the street. When he was almost abreast of the stage, Slade stepped from a doorway twenty feet before him and stopped in his tracks. Harris turned on one heel and stood with his left side quartering toward Slade—the old pose she remembered so well. There was a tense quiet, the length of the street.

"Those you hire do poor work from behind," Harris said. "Maybe you sometimes take a chance yourself and work from in front." His thumb was hooked in the opening of his shirt just above the butt of his gun.

Slade held a cigarette in his right hand and raised it slowly to his lips. He removed it and flicked the ash from the end, then inspected the results and snapped it again—and the downward move of his wrist was carried through in a smooth sweep for his gun. It flashed into his hand, but—his knees sagged under him as a forty-five slug struck him an inch above the buckle of his belt. Even as he toppled forward, he fired, and Harris' gun barked again. Then the Three Bar men were vaulting to their saddles. Evans careened down the street leading the paint-horse, and within thirty seconds after Slade's first move for his gun, a dozen riders were turning the cor-

ner on the run. Before the spectators had time to realize that it was over, the Three Bar men were gone. Slade had many friends in town.

The girl had seen Harris' draw, merely a single pull from left to right, and by his quartering pose the gun had been trained on Slade at the instant it cleared the holster—not one superfluous move, even to the straightening of his wrist. The driver's voice reached her.

"Fastest draw in the world for the few that can use it," he said.

The guard opened the door. The girl was sitting with her head bowed in her hands.

"Don't take it that way, ma'am," he counseled. "He was a hard one—Slade."

But he had misread his signs. She felt no regret for Slade, only a wave of thankfulness, so powerful as almost to unnerve her, over Harris' having escaped untouched. She accused herself of callousness, but the spring of her sympathy, usually so ready, seemed dry as dust when she would have wasted a few drops on Slade.

THE next day, in the late afternoon, Harris looked up and saw a chap-clad rider on the edge of the valley. She had ridden over unannounced on a horse she had borrowed from Brill. She answered the wave of his hat and urged the horse down the slope. He met her at the mouth of the lane, and together they walked back to the new buildings of the ranch. The men breaking horses in the new corrals were the same old hands. The same old Waddles presided over the new cook-shack. Her old things, rescued from the fire, were arranged in the living-room of the new house. A row of new storerooms and the shop stood on the site of the old. And in the midst of all the improvements the old cabin first erected on the Three Bar stood protected by a picket fence on which a few vines were already beginning to climb.

"It didn't take long to throw them up, with all hands working, along in the winter when there wasn't much else to do," he said.

After the men had quit work to greet the returning Three Bar boss, she went over every detail of the new house. The big living-room and fireplace were modeled closely along the lines of her old quarters; heads and furs decorated the walls; furs and Indian rugs covered the floor. Running water had been piped down from a side-hill spring to the kitchen. The new house was modernized.

Harris saddled Calico and Papoose, and they rode down to the fields. As they turned into the lane, they heard the twang of Waddles' guitar from the cook-shack, the booming voice raised in song in mid-afternoon, a thing heretofore unheard of in the annals of Three Bar life.

"There'll be one real feast tonight," Harris prophesied. "Waddles will spread himself."

They rode past the meadow, covered with a knee-deep stand of alfalfa.

"It was only tramped down," he said. "She came up in fine shape this spring. We'll put up a thousand tons of hay."

He held straight on past the meadow,

turned off below the lower fence and angled southwest across the range. The calves and yearlings on along their route gave proof that the grading-up of the Three Bar herds was already having its effect. Ninety per cent were straight red stock, with only a few throwbacks to off-color strains.

NEAR sunset they dismounted on the ridge from which, almost a year before, they had viewed the first move of organized law in the Coldriver Strip.

A white-topped wagon came toward them up the valley along the same route followed by the file of dusty riders on that other day. A woman held the reins over the team, and a curly-haired youngster jostled about on the seat by her side. A man wrangled a nondescript drove of horses and cows in the rear.

"That's the way we both came into this country first, you and I," Harris said, "—just like that little shaver on the seat."

"Will they find a place to settle?" she asked with a sudden hope that they would find a suitable site for a home.

"Maybe not close around here," he said. "Most of the good sites you can get water on are picked up. But they'll find a place either here or somewhere else a little farther on."

He slipped an arm about her shoulders.

"It's been right lonesome planning without a partner to talk it all over with at night," he said. "Have you come back for keeps to help me make the Three Bar the best outfit in three States? I can't hold down that job alone."

She nodded and leaned against him.

"That's what they wanted—old Bill and Cal," she said. "But it's nice that we want it too. I've come for keeps; and the road to the outside is closed."

They stood and watched the sun pitch over the far edge of the world. Down in the valley below them the hopeful squatters were looking for a place to camp.

Hal G. Evarts

completes here his longest story, so far. No new writer of the decade has more quickly leaped into the front rank of American novelists than Mr. Evarts. In an early issue of this magazine will be published another story by him of the West he knows so well.



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(See photographs of Mrs. Vernilya above.)

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THROUGH ETERNITY

(Continued from page 56)

"He is but a penniless beggar who must within the space of a few new suns seek alms even of the poorest. How, then, may he pay thee a hundred pieces of gold? Thou art a fool," cried the gambler.

"Ai-ah! If thy words be truth, I am indeed defrauded," lamented the old man.

"My gold awaits thee," urged Bock Eye, drawing out a full pouch that clinked alluringly as it fell upon the table. "Take it, and profit whilst thou mayest."

The aged mender of shoes was tempted. But because, as all men know, he who breaks a pledged word may never again endure himself, he regretfully shook his head.

"If he come not at the appointed hour, then—" he began as Wong opened the door and entered.

Straightway the fisherman tossed upon the table his sack well weighted with fifty of the yellow coins which had been Bock Eye's.

"Thus, O Kong, do I well fulfill my bond," he said, and saw in the grateful eyes of Soon Lo that for which many men pay more and never receive. Then to Bock Eye he spoke, as he had promised at the moment of their night's parting.

"Thus also, Bock Eye, do I give thee proof that at thy fan-tan table in the hours of the darkness last past, the gods fortune me with a winning from thee of uncounted richness—even Soon Lo, the jewel of marvelous beauty whom thou dost covet and now shalt never possess."

The face of Bock Eye, the one of much craft and guile, was branded with the hatred within him as in silence he departed from the shop of Kong.

The girl's father slid the pouch of gold within his blouse-sleeve and spoke with gracious cordiality born of his strong desire for another of equal heft and yet unpaid.

"Thy debt of this day is well discharged," he said. "So is the bond of thy marriage to the daughter of my house sealed, if"—a significant pause—"if, O Wong You, thou bringest another such on the first sun of the new moon. Is this not fair truth?"

"Assuredly. As was agreed, on the first day of the moon still unborn, it shall be thine," Wong replied, and departed without words with his Lily, for as the ancient law teaches, it is shame for one to hold speech before marriage with her whose beauty is to adorn his house. Quite penniless and quite happy was the fisherman on whom the gods had chosen to smile as he returned to his *tong*-house.

"Gold is the gift of the gods," he mused as he lay in his bunk that night and thought of the fifty precious pieces yet to be obtained. "Therefore beyond question he who doubts the coming of that gold which he rightly requires, doubts Heaven's goodness. I question not, and in the appointed hour shall receive."

Whereupon he slept without care and

dreamed of Soon Lo, most beautiful of jewels, who had been granted to him by the gods' favor that she might escape the unwelcome arms of Bock Eye. In his dreams he saw a cabin,—one very different from the thatched mud hovel in which he was born in the Middle Kingdom,—and it stood upon the rich loam land of California, which was green and very beautiful with the melons and fruits his hands had tilled. Before the door his sons played and were watched over by Soon Lo, whose eyes looked into Wong's always with love as he returned from his labors. And when he awoke, Wong You was vastly happy and content though he was penniless, for his dream ripened in his heart as melons had upon his fields.

As he wandered that afternoon by the waterside alone with his happiness, he communed shrewdly with himself.

"The gods provide, but Heavenly gifts may not rightly be expected without earthly effort," he quoted from the ancient precepts of his race. "Therefore the fifty pieces of gold, which beyond doubt shall be sent from Heaven, nevertheless cannot gladden my eyes unless I seek them. Diligently I shall search."

Wong You's method of aiding the speedy delivery of Heaven's bounty was to buy two Chinese lottery tickets with the single silver dollar his *tong* provided each day for pocket-money. Fortune, however, remained unkind. Day after day passed, and the lottery symbols he chose never were drawn.

ON the evening before the first day of the new moon when the fifty pieces of gold must be delivered, Wong You still lacked so much as one. But treasured behind mutely confident lips was his dream-vision of the cabin of joy that was to be his; in his heart, too, was unshaken faith that his gods might test but never fail him. Therefore he was at peace as he strolled the streets, awaiting the last drawing that could profit him within the few remaining hours before Kong, if fifty pieces of gold were not forthcoming, would be privileged to resell his Lily to whomsoever he chose. In Wong You's preoccupation of mind, time passed unreckoned, and the drawing was over before he reached the company's close-barred house.

The lottery room was in an uproar as Wong You entered. Shrill voices loud-raised in excitement acclaimed an event of unanimous interest.

"What has befallen?" inquired the fisherman.

"One ticket has tonight drawn a nine. But he who is the own brother of good fortune not yet appears to claim his rich prize," a dozen voices answered.

"I am he," answered Wong, and the glow of his perfect faith grew even brighter in his eyes.

"Thou hast not yet seen the winning numbers. How knowest thou that thine is the ticket of fortune?"—from the excited chorus.

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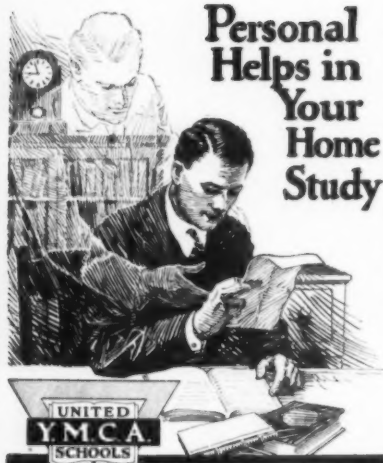


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"Plainly, for Heaven's gifts are received in the hour of need," the fisherman answered, and drew his tissue slip from within his blouse. It was the winning nine. With a single half-dollar he had won eight and forty golden eagles, a feat not duplicated a dozen times a year in all Chinatown.

Wong You pounced his gold coins smilingly; and straightway, with the confidence of certain knowledge of success, went to the fan-tan table of Bock Eye, who, all men well knew, was a heartless one of greatest cunning.

"Ah, comest thou to play?" greeted the gambler derisively, for he knew that Wong at mid-evening had been penniless.

"Aye, to take from thee but two pieces of gold that the eight and forty but now sent me by Heaven shall on the morrow make Soon Lo, the Lily, mine own by right of purchase fully paid."

Wong You drew out his gold pouch and clinked it upon the table.

"First shall I drink of thy tea," he added; "for having taken but two of thy many gold-pieces, I depart to wager no more with thee, for thou has lost to me in the Lily all that man may attain in life."

As the fisherman entered the tea-room with his bag of gold closely held within his blouse sleeve, Bock Eye turned to the carved stand in which was kept his rice liquor. Twice he drank and yet once again, for the demon cunning of the Father of All Serpents may be born of rice liquor and an evil heart.

There was the beady glitter of devil's purpose in Bock Eye's eyes as he returned to the gaming table and bent over the coin box as though to appraise its store. As he stooped, he spoke soundlessly into his dealer's ear. And then he who still coveted Soon Lo's beauty waited with secret joy.

WONG YOU returned shortly and laid a single piece of gold on the second number. He lost. On the second deal he wagered two coins on the same choice. Again he lost; he wagered three and saw them swept away. He increased his wager again and again, each time with unaccountable misfortune. Within the space of a half-hour he saw the last of his marvelously won pieces of lottery gold ruthlessly raked into Bock Eye's money-drawer. Once again he was without a single coin. As Wong turned toward the door, the gambler beckoned him to the cabinet where his rice liquor was hidden, and on his face was the brand of the evil design he purposed. Wong refused the offered drink.

"Thou art now without money?" queried Bock Eye with the voice of friendliness. The fisherman nodded. "And tomorrow must pay to Kong fifty full pieces of gold?" the gambler added. Again Wong nodded.

"Where shalt thou find them within the space of this single night?"

"I know not, but surely will they be found, for the will of the gods may not be denied," insisted the man of much faith.

"If thou speakest truth, thou shalt have them even of me," said the tempter, using suavity to hide the deepness of his guile. "Thou gavest Kong fifty

pieces of gold at the making of the bond by which thou didst buy his daughter of beauty. Even now, if thou believest in the goodly will of thy gods, thou mayest wager the gold already paid Kong and also thy right to buy Soon Lo, against the gold within my strong-box—thy fifty becoming nothing or two hundred in a single play. Thus, as Heaven wills, shalt thou possess the Lily. Soon Lo, or lose her forever to me. Dost thou still dare? Is thy faith in thy gods still of man's strength?"

FOR a brief second Wong You hesitated; for he loved, and love chooses light risks. But as he thought, his faith grew strong.

"Aye, for well I know thou shalt never possess the Lily, who is mine by Heaven's help," he answered stanchly. "Come. We play. I wager as before upon the second number."

Well hidden was Bock Eye's joy at these words as the two returned to the table, where, as before, the crafty one stood behind his dealer.

"This Son of the Sea wagers fifty pieces of gold upon the second number," he announced, and the dealer felt the nails of Bock Eye's fingers press with swift cunning against his shoulder. "Is it truth I speak?" he concluded, turning to Wong.

"Assuredly," answered the latter, looking into the gambler's face; and then, for the first time, his heart chilled, for the triumph he read there was plainer than the words of wisdom within the books of the learned. But Wong knew not why Bock Eye's belief in victory suddenly had grown to giant's strength, and so rejected his new fear.

"Deal," commanded the one of evil heart.

The dealer lifted the overturned bowl, and four by four drew out the counters, which were copper coins. And often as he drew, his hand trembled as if from excitement, and the steel rake rapped sharply against the coins that remained. The eyes of the three were fixed on the diminishing pile as fiercely as though he who counted them first might live, as though he that counted last must die.

"Two!" cried Wong You when a scarce dozen were left. "The wager is mine! Heaven has not failed me."

"Three!" shouted Bock Eye loudly. "Look, thou."

The dealer's rake rattled heavily against the bottom-most of the pile, and a counter that Wong had seen as one was shown to be two. Beyond denial, Bock Eye had triumphed.

Wong You turned away. Lost was Soon Lo, the Lily—lost to Bock Eye, whom she hated with the hatred of great fear. Heaven, then, must be unfaithful. With eyes blinded by grief, the fisherman lurched toward the door.

"Even as thou hast been, are all mine enemies confounded, O Wong You, thou beggarly fisherman—confounded, aye, even though they assert the friendship of Heaven," was the taunt from Bock Eye that followed him.

At his employer's words, the dealer sprang to his feet, his face contorted with distress such as may not be borne.



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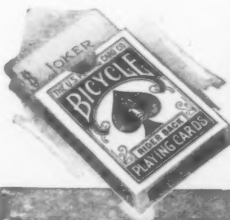
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Cribbage at a Glance

PLAYERS—2, 3, or 4 as partners. Best, two-hand.
OBJECT OF GAME—To form various counting combinations, such as pairs, triplets, fours, sequences and fifteens.

DEAL—Cut for first deal in each game, low cut winning deal; deal alternates thereafter. Use full pack, deal 6 cards to each player, 1 at a time. Misdeal scores 2 points for opponent immediately. Each discards 2 cards face down to form "crib". It belongs to dealer but is not counted until after hand is played out. Pone (opponent) cuts pack and dealer turns up top card; this is called "starter". If it is a jack, dealer scores two points immediately.

THE PLAY—Pone plays any card from his hand face up on table in front of him and announces its numerical (or pip) value. (All kings, queens and jacks are announced as tens; other cards by number of spots.) Dealer then plays, announcing sum of his card and the one already played. Play continues alternately, each player keeping his cards separate and adding the value of each card to sum of those already played. This sum must not exceed 31. If a player has no card which will play with the sum of 31, he announces a "go". Pone continues until he reaches 31, or can play no further. Then cards played are turned face down, balance of cards in hands played out, hands and crib counted, (see below), and cards dealt for new hand.

POINTS SCORED DURING PLAY—The player who approaches most nearly to 31 during the play, scores 1 point; if he reaches 31 exactly he scores 2 points. If last card played does not make an even 31, it counts 1; if it makes 15, 3 points.

Combinations may be formed by opponents playing alternately and also by cards played from one hand (within limit of 31) after pone has said "go".

Fifteens—2 points are scored by player of card which makes the numerical value of the cards played exactly 15.

Pairs—2 points are scored by player of card of same denomination as that last played.

Triplets—6 points are scored for matching a pair just played, provided that neither 31 nor "go" intervenes. (Example: Three fours in sequence.)

Fours—12 points are scored by player of a fourth card matching triplets just played, provided that neither 31 nor "go" intervenes.

Sequences—When 3 cards in numerical sequence are played, the player of the last card counts 1 point for each card in the sequence, even though they are not played in numerical rotation. Player adding fourth card in sequence scores 4. An intervening card, duplicate, "go", or 31 breaks sequence.

COUNTING HANDS AND CRIB—After cards are played out, each player counts all points in his hand in combination with the "starter", pone counting first. After counting his hand, dealer counts his crib combined with "starter". Pair counts 2; triplets, 6; fours, 12; 3-card sequence, 3; each additional card in sequence, 1; fifteens, 2; and jack of trumps in hand or crib, 1 point. **Double Run of Three**—(A 3-card sequence with a pair to one of the 3 cards), counts 8 points. **Double Run of Four**—(A 4-card sequence with a pair to one of the 4 cards), counts 10 points. **Triple Run**—Consists of triplets, with 2 other cards in sequence with triplet, 15 points. **Quadruple Run**—Consists of 2 pairs and a card in sequence with both, 16 points.

Fifteens—Formed by cards totaling 15 exactly, count 2 each time they are made. Use each card in as many different "15" combinations as possible. **Four-Card Flush**—4 cards of one suit in hand only (not crib), 4 points. **Five-Card Flush**—4 cards in hand or crib of same suit as starter, 5 points. The crib is not a flush unless the starter is the same suit.

STARTER—Is used only in counting the hands and crib.

MARKING SCORE—Points are scored as made on a "pull-up" board. See cut. Each hole counts 1 point. Players start from same end, pegging parallel with each other down outside edge and up inside to the sixty-first, or game hole.

GAME—61 or 121 points.

For rules on three-hand and four-hand cribbage, see "The Official Rules of Card Games" or "Six Popular Games" offered below.

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"Is he called Wong?" he cried. "Ai-ah, sudden illness overcomes me. Swiftly I must seek relief from the brewer of healing herbs."

Bock Eye, in the joy of his triumph, was opening his liquor cabinet.

"Go, Sing Yow," he agreed. "Thou hast served me well. We play no more this night, for presently I shall claim Soon Lo, who is mine, from her father."

The dealer had followed Wong You to the street even before Bock Eye had poured the liquor that adds evil to hearts already evil. As Wong stood dazed with grief before the window within which lay the jade bracelet he had chosen for the arm of the Lily now lost to him, a trembling hand touched his shoulder.

"Thy name truly is Wong?" asked a voice that was heavy with wretchedness.

"Assuredly," the fisherman answered as he recognized the fan-tan dealer.

"And mine Sing! Thou, even as I, art a Four Brother. Ai-ah, ai-ah, I did not know. Bock Eye hast robbed thee, and thrice accursed is my hand which aided him. His counter coins are joined, two in one, with such devil's skill that no man's eye may detect them. But at the sharp tap of my rake they part, one becoming two, and thus thou didst lose thy eight and forty pieces of gold—also the wager of fifty that cost thee Soon Lo."

"A thousand curses upon him! He shall restore in full ere the sun rises," cried Wong You, fiercely primeval hatred burning within him as he thought of the Lily of whom Bock Eye, the cheater, would have defrauded him.

"Aye; therefore I followed thee when thy name was spoken and I knew our brotherhood. I go to the *tong*-house to bring the Exalted Master even to the gambling-house of Bock Eye, where the double coins shall prove my words. Without doubt the thief shall return thy losses and pay thy just profits."

"Go. I await thee here," answered the fisherman, for he was close beside the stairway that led to the shop of Kong, and something within him warned that Bock Eye would rouse the mender of shoes from sleep to demand the Lily even before the rising of the sun.

THE fan-tan dealer departed with swift steps and left Wong You on guard before the shop within which slept Soon Lo. And presently, as the fisherman waited, Bock Eye came with the speed of great impatience and would have descended Kong's stairs when a hand seized his shoulder and he was thrown upon the pavement.

"Thou art a cheater and a thief, and the whelp of the father of all devils, Bock Eye," cried Wong You as he stooped above his fallen enemy. "Well now do I know thy accursed cunning. Thy fan-tan counters are double, so that one, at thy command, may be made two, and thus I falsely lost my pieces of gold and also the Lily whom thou wouldst seek even now. Quickly will be here the Princely Master of the Four Brothers, and then in thy house shall be shown him thy coins of crookedness, so that true justice may be done me at thy hands. Else, beyond doubt, my mighty *tong* shall require the last drop of thy blood ere the darkness becomes light."

The face of Bock Eye became gray with fear as he heard, for he knew Wong You's words were truth. The double coins would be found, and repayment or his life exacted. Also the matter would be noised broadcast, and all men would avoid his fan-tan table. Soon Lo, too, was lost! Hatred bred murder in him at the thought. Wong You's tongue must be stilled ere his tale was told—thus prompted the devil he served.

"To my house we go without delay, and there I will pay as thou hast said," Bock Eye agreed. But as he rose to his feet, his hand clasped the dagger within his sleeve.

Craftily he stepped close to Wong You with fair words of contrition; and then, swiftly, he struck. But Wong was a fisherman of two men's strength and quickness, and he seized Bock Eye's wrist and turned the blade from his own toward his enemy's breast. As they struggled, the gambler lunged forward in the frenzy of his hatred; and the dagger, still within his own hand, bit deeply. Bock Eye cried out in death-anguish, sagged slowly at the knees and fell.

It was exactly at this moment that Police Sergeant Danny Maher turned the corner and saw the dying man, the crimsoned dagger and Wong You bending over him.

"A *tong* murderer caught in the act for the first time in Chinatown's history, and I'm the man with the luck to do it," was the thought that flashed through his mind as he sprang upon Wong You and handcuffed him while his whistle summoned his squad. . . .

When the master of the Four Brothers arrived, Bock Eye's body was being lifted into the morgue wagon; Bartlett Alley swarmed with policemen, and Wong You had vanished.

"He slew Bock Eye, which was his just right as the Law of the Ages teaches," was the pronouncement of the Four Brothers chieftain to Sing Yow. "He will seek safety in the *tong*-house, and the heirs of the thief who rightly is dead shall be told of his evil deed and their debt to Wong You required under pain of death even before the rising of the sun."

The debt was paid as the Four Brothers demanded, but Wong You did not return. With the coming of the day his *tong* chief learned why. He was in the prison of the white men, charged with murder.

"Full justice was done by Wong You in the slaying of Bock Eye as the Law of the Ages well attests, but what of the ancient law and justice know the *fan-quai* courts? Less than nothing. I fear for my *tong* brother," were the old man's grave words at the news. Then he summoned the American attorney of the *tong* and bade him visit Wong You's cell with an interpreter.

When they returned, the *tong* chief was told the full truth of the death of Bock Eye as it came from Wong's lips.

"I believe him," announced the attorney, "but no jury ever will—not in the face of the evidence of the sergeant who found him bending over the body with the dagger on the pavement beside him. It is more than likely they will hang your *tong*-man."

The chieftain's brow furrowed with heavy gravity.

"Strange to me is your white justice, which does injustice," he answered. "Do thou all that may be done."

Sing Yow heard the white lawyer's pronouncement with deep anguish and self-accusation. His was the fault, his the responsibility, and well he knew it.

When the lawyer was gone, he delivered Wong You's personal message to the *tong* chief.

"All shall be done as he desires," was the Aged One's answer.

Thus at the fourth hour of the declining sun on the first day of the new moon, a Four Brother messenger entered the shop of Kong, mender of shoes. He laid a pouch of fifty pieces of gold in the eager hands of the father of Soon Lo, the Lily.

"Such is the bargain made by Wong You, a Four Brother of truthful tongue, and thus has it been fulfilled, though he be in the accursed jailhouse of the *fan quai*," announced the messenger. "Thy daughter thou hast sold him shall remain here, Wong You making proper payment for her food. So commands our Exalted Master at the wish of Wong You."

Kong bowed low and was happy, for fifty pieces of gold weighted each of his sleeves. But Soon Lo hid herself from all eyes, and ever-flowing waters of sorrow cruelly reddened her cheeks throughout many long days.

WONG YOU'S days in the cell in which he was placed to await trial for murder were long and lonely, but were leavened by the joyous thought that the Lily now was his own by purchase that no man could deny. She was secure, and he, as before, in the hands of his gods. Wherefore he awaited their will patiently and without fear. But on an afternoon as Wong lay upon his bunk easing his solitude with mind pictures of a cabin from whose doorway Soon Lo forever smiled upon him with great love, his cell door was thrown open.

"Here's a buddy fer ye, me bhoys," said a turnkey, and thrust another Chinese into the cell. The fisherman saw that he was Sing Yow, his fellow *tong*-man, who had been Bock Eye's dealer.

"Wherefore?" Wong You asked wonderingly.

"Grieving because of mine evil deed by which our sacred brotherhood was profaned and thou broughtest here, I listened to the spirit voices of our forefathers, who upbraided me in the darkness," answered Sing. "That their curses might not forever follow me, I drank heavily of rice liquor, and then, that I might share thy sorrow and comfort thy solitude, I purposely fell even at the feet of the white policemen, and have been condemned for ten days here for my drunkenness. For that space we remain together. Then will I be freed."

So for ten days the two were comrades and found comfort in their companionship as they talked of their Four Brother kinship and of Soon Lo, the beautiful one, and of life and of death; and when Sing Yow accused himself with bitter words for his fault, Wong You denied him, saying: "Thou didst not

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know I was of our *tong*; therefore thou art guiltless."

But always to this Sing Yow made no answer.

On the night before he was to be freed, secretly Sing poured the juice of the poppy which he had hidden beneath his blouse into Wong You's tea; but he poured lightly, so that his *tong* brother might sleep without waking for the space of a single darkness and then awake unharmed. As Wong You slept thus heavily, Sing Yow took from him the old and torn garments he wore and dressed him in his own, which were new and different in color. Then he too slept in contentment.

With the coming of the morning the cell door was unlocked, and the turnkey appeared.

"Sing Yow, ye yaller haythin, get up and get out, fer we're tired of boar lin' ye fer nothin'," he called.

And Sing Yow, who was dressed as Wong You had been, aroused the fisherman, who understood not the tongue of the white men.

"Joyous news greets thee, my brother," he cried. "The cunning of the lawyer of our *tong* has overcome the accursed law of the *fan quai*, and even now thou art summoned to freedom. Go, my brother, and quickly seek our *tong*-house where thy gold justly won of Bock Eye awaits thee; then swiftly to the shop of Kong, where the eyes of the little Lily shall brighten with happiness at thy coming. Straightway thereafter seek out the spot where thy house of happiness shall be built upon rich and fruitful melon lands. Happy, O Wong You, am I in this hour, for in thy freedom my grievous sin is wiped away, and no longer do I fear the spirit voices of our forefathers."

The two touched hands in the secret clasp of their brotherhood, and Wong You passed out unquestioned through the steel-barred doors of the prison, for he was in the raiment of Sing Yow, and white eyes, which are blind, know not one Chinese face from another.

WHEN his *tong* brother was safely gone, Sing Yow gave fervent thanks to his gods and spoke without fear to his ancestors, now fully appeased. And then from his bosom he drew forth the bottle of poppy-juice and drank to the last drop. When, shortly, his eyes grew heavy, he lay upon his bunk and slept in the arms of happiness and awakened never again.

Thus it happened that the newspapers of the *fan quai* reported next day that Wong You, the Chinese *tong* murderer, had killed himself in his cell.

The heart of Wong You, the fisherman, was heavy with regret when he knew of Sing Yow's deed of reparation, but his *tong* chief chided him, saying that Sing Yow had achieved great merit, and that, from the spirit land, he would read with exceeding gladness his name inscribed with great honor in the Sacred Book of the Four Brothers.

So, though five thousand and one years have passed, was the ancient compact made between the four who swore brotherhood unto eternity on the bleak steppes of North China richly fulfilled.

WHITE MAGIC

(Continued from page 65)

The voice was very gentle, very kind, as the old man repeated: "And if he want nothing?"

"He must want a thousand things!"

"Not one," said the old man softly, "not one."

"But—"

"Listen. It is my turn."

"I'm listening."

"That peddler, he is ol'. Will he grow young if you put him in a fine brick house?"

"No."

"He is ver' poor. But the poor man who wants nothing, he is as well off as the rich man, *hein?*"

"Maybe."

"You would lay him in a fine soft bed. But if he did not sleep there for want of the branches and the wind moving in them?"

Harvey was silent.

"You would give him rich food and drinks. Good. But men may starve to deat' with full bellies, my frien'. And if he starved so for the dawn in summer and the shanty-men's fires in the winter and the trails of all the hills?"

Again Harvey was silent. The old man rose slowly and lifted his basket. Harvey started. He said passionately: "But look at what he—at what you did for me!"

VERY gently the old peddler smiled in a creasing of dim wrinkles. "He only carry the basket," he said softly. "It is the good God that settles what shall come out of it. For you, the fine house and the garden full of white flowers for Madame to walk in. For me—"

He slung the strap of the basket over his shoulder, pulled out his paper of kinnikinnick, filled and lighted the little pipe.

"Good man, you," he said between puffs, "but there's one thing you cannot do. You cannot give to the one that wants nothing."

"I sha'n't give up! There's five hundred good dollars waiting for you whenever you want it, anyway. When you're older, or sick, my turn will come!"

"Per'aps." The old figure was withdrawing from him into the shadows, infinitely alien, infinitely remote.

"Will you take *nothing* now?" called Harvey, as if to some one a very long way off.

The old man hesitated. Then from the columbines nodding through the fence he picked a single blossom. "This," he said, "to remember!" His voice too was withdrawing, fading away.

The savor of kinnikinnick passed along Magnetewan Avenue, and past the Public Library, and up Confederation Street. Harvey was left motionless in the dusk among the white columbines. He held in his hands a red handkerchief. He lifted it, and breathed the rank smell that opened to him the gates of all his past.

Shamefacedly, he brushed it with his lips.



The Strange Story of an Arab Merchant

There is a tale in the Arabian Nights of an Arab merchant who, returning from a pilgrimage, seats himself by a spring in the desert to eat dates, the stones of which he throws in the air.

It so happens that one of these stones kills the son of a genie, and when the poor merchant is charged with the crime, he is overwhelmed. He had not imagined one could do so much harm with a date stone. This story, weird as it is, illustrates an every-day truth.

How few of us give sufficient thought to the consequences of our acts.

For instance, how many housewives realize the danger there may eventually be for husbands, children and themselves in the tea or coffee they serve at meal-time?

Any doctor can tell you that tea and coffee contain drug properties whose influence is to stimulate nerves, often producing sleeplessness, nervous irritation, and a general slowing down of efficiency.

Yet people are not dependent on tea or coffee for their meal-time drink. Thousands of former tea and coffee drinkers now use Instant Postum. They like the rich, full-bodied flavor of this pure cereal beverage and its freedom from harm, and they can make it in a moment in the cup by simply adding boiling water.

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THE OLD

(Continued from

Delia lifted her hands, and raising the white bonnet from her dark polished head, shook it so that the crystals glittered.

"I hope you like it? It's for your wedding," she laughed.

Charlotte Lovell stood motionless. In her mother's old dove-colored poplin, freshly banded with rows of crimson velvet ribbon, an ermine tippet crossed on her bosom, and a new beaver bonnet with a falling feather, she had already something of the assurance and majesty of a married woman.

"And you know your hair is darker, darling," Delia added, still hopefully surveying her.

"Darker? It's gray," Charlotte broke out in her deep voice, pushing back one of the pomaded bands that framed her face, and showing a white lock on her temple. "You needn't save up your bonnet: I'm not going to be married," she added harshly, with a smile that showed her teeth in a fleeting glare.

Delia had just enough presence of mind to lay down the white bonnet, marabou up, before she flung herself on her cousin.

"Not going to be married? Charlotte, are you perfectly crazy?"

"Why is it crazy to do what I think right?"

"But people said you were going to marry him the year you came out. And no one understood what happened then. And now—how can it possibly be right? You simply *can't*!" Delia incoherently summed up.

"Oh—people!" said Charlotte wearily.

Her married cousin looked at her with a start. Something thrilled in her voice that Delia had never heard in it, or in any other human voice, before. Its echo seemed to set their familiar world rocking, and the Axminster carpet actually heaved under Delia's shrinking slippers.

CHARLOTTE stood staring ahead of her with strained lids. In the pale brown of her eyes Delia noticed the green specks that floated there when she was angry or excited.

"Charlotte—where on earth have you come from?" she cried, drawing the girl down to the sofa.

"Come from?"

"Yes. You look as if you'd seen a ghost—an army of ghosts."

The same snarling smile drew up Charlotte's lip. "I've seen Joe," she said.

"Well? . . . Oh, Chatty," Delia cried, abruptly illuminated, "you don't mean to say that you're going to let any little thing in Joe's past—not that I've ever heard the least hint, never. But if there were—" She drew a deep breath, and bravely proceeded to extremities. "Even if you've heard that he's been—that he's had a child—of course he would have provided for it before—"

The girl shook her head. "I know; you needn't go on. 'Men will be men;' but it's not that."

"Tell me what it is."

Charlotte Love! looked about the sunny, prosperous room as if it were the

MAID

page 35)

image of her world, and that world were a prison she must break out of. She lowered her head. "I want—to get away," she panted.

"Get away? From Joe?"

"From his ideas—the Ralston ideas."

Delia bridled—after all, she was a Ralston! "The Ralston ideas? I haven't found them—so unbearably unpleasant to live with," she smiled a little tartly.

"No. But it was different with you: they didn't ask you to give up things."

"What things?" What in the world, Delia wondered, had poor Charlotte, that anyone could want her to give up? She had always been in the position of taking rather than of having to surrender. "Can't you explain to me, dear?" Delia urged.

"My poor children—he says I'm to give them up," cried the girl in a stricken whisper.

"Give them up? Give up helping them?"

"Seeing them—looking after them. Give them up altogether. He got his mother to explain to me. After—after we have children, he's afraid—afraid our children might catch things. . . . He'll give me money, of course, to pay some one—a hired person to look after them. He thought that handsome." Charlotte broke out in a sob. She flung off her bonnet and smothered her weeping in the cushions.

DELIA sat perplexed. Of all unforeseen complications this was surely the least imaginable. And with all the acquired Ralston that was in her she could not help seeing the force of Joe's objection, could almost find herself agreeing with him. No one in New York had forgotten the death of the poor Henry van der Luydens' only child, from small-pox caught at the circus to which an unprincipled nurse had surreptitiously taken him. After that warning, parents felt justified in every precaution against contagion. And poor people were so ignorant and careless, and their children, of course, so perpetually exposed to everything catching. No, Joe Ralston was certainly right, and Charlotte almost insanely unreasonable. But it would be useless to tell her so now. Instinctively, Delia temporized.

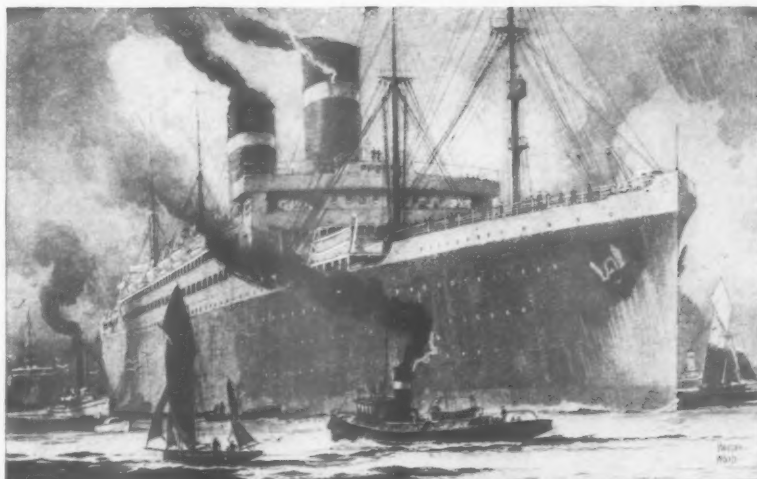
"After all," she whispered to the prone ear, "if it's only after you have children—you may not have any—for some time."

"Oh, yes, I shall!" came back in anguish from the cushions.

Delia smiled with matronly superiority. "Really, Chatty, I don't quite see how you can know. You don't understand."

Charlotte Lovell lifted herself up. Her collar of Brussels lace hung in a crumpled wisp on the loose folds of her bodice, and through the disorder of her hair the white lock glimmered haggardly. In the pale brown of her eyes the little green specks floated like leaves in a trout-pool.

"Poor girl," Delia thought, "how old and ugly she looks! More than ever like



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an old maid; and she seems to have no idea that she'll never have another chance."

"You must try to be sensible, Chatty dear. After all, one's own babies have the first claim."

"That's just it." The girl seized her fiercely by the wrists. "How can I give up my own baby?"

"Your—your?" Delia's world again began to waver under her. "Which of the poor little waifs, dearest, do you call your own baby?" she questioned patiently.

Charlotte looked her straight in the eyes. "I call my own baby my own baby."

"Your own—? You're hurting my wrists, Chatty." Delia freed herself, forcing a smile. "Your own—?"

"My own little girl, the one that Jessamine and Cyrus—"

"Oh—" Delia Ralston gasped.

The two cousins sat silent, facing each other; but Delia looked away. It came over her with a shudder of repugnance that such things should not have been spoken in her bedroom, so near the spotless nursery across the passage. Mechanically she smoothed the folds of her silk skirt, which her cousin's embrace had crumpled. Then she looked again at Charlotte's eyes, and her own melted.

"Oh, poor Chatty—poor Chatty!" She held out her arms to her cousin.

CHAPTER II

THE shepherd continued to steal his kiss from the shepherdess, and the clock in the fallen trunk continued to tick out the minutes.

Delia, petrified, sat unconscious of their passing, her cousin clasped to her. She was dumb with the horror and amazement of learning that her own blood ran in the veins of the anonymous foundling, the "hundred-dollar baby" about whom New York had so long furtively jested and conjectured. It was her first contact with the nether side of the smooth social surface, and she sickened at the thought that such things were, and that she, Delia Ralston, should be hearing of them in her own house, from the lips of the victim! For Chatty of course was a victim—but whose? She had spoken no name, and Delia could put no question; the horror of it sealed her lips. Her mind had instantly raced back over Chatty's past; but she saw no masculine figure in it but Joe Ralston's. And to connect Joe with the episode was obviously unthinkable. Some one in the South, then? But no; Charlotte had been ill when she left—and in a flash Delia understood the real nature of that illness, and of the girl's disappearance. But from such speculations, too, her mind recoiled, and instinctively she fastened on something she could still grasp: Joe Ralston's attitude about Chatty's paupers. Of course Joe could not let his wife risk bringing home contagion—that was safe ground to dwell on. Her own Jim would have felt in the same way; and she would certainly have agreed with him.

Her eyes traveled back to the clock. She always thought of Clem Spender

when she looked at the clock, and suddenly she wondered—if things had been different—what *he* would have said if she had made such an appeal to him as Charlotte had made to Joe. The thing seemed inconceivable; yet in a flash of mental readjustment she saw herself as his wife, she saw her children as his; she pictured herself asking him to let her go on caring for the poor waifs in the Mercer Street stable, and she distinctly heard his laugh and his light answer: "Why on earth did you ask, you little goose? Do you take me for such a Pharisee as that?"

Yes, that was Clem Spender all over—tolerant, reckless, indifferent to consequences, always doing the kind thing at the moment, and too often leaving others to pay the score. "There's something cheap about Clem," Jim had once said in his heavy way. Delia Ralston roused herself and pressed her cousin closer. "Chatty, tell me," she whispered.

"There's nothing more."

"I mean, about yourself—this thing—this—" Clem Spender's voice was still in her ears. "You loved some one," she breathed.

"Yes. That's over. . . . Now it's only the child. . . . And I could love Joe—in another way." Chatty Lovell straightened herself, wan and frowning.

"I need the money—I must have it for my baby, or else they'll send it to an institution." She paused. "But that's not all. I want to marry—to be a wife, like all of you. I should have loved Joe's children—our children. Life doesn't stop."

"No; I suppose not. But you speak as if—as if—the person who took advantage of you—"

"No one took advantage of me. I was lonely and unhappy. I met some one who was lonely and unhappy. People don't all have your luck. We were both too poor to marry each other—and Mother would never have consented. And so one day—one day before he said good-by—"

"He said good-by?"

"Yes. He was going to leave the country."

"To leave the country—knowing?"

"How was he to know? He doesn't live here. He'd just come back—come back to see his family—for a few weeks—" She broke off, her thin lips pressed together upon her secret.

THERE was a silence. Delia stared at the bold shepherd.

"Come back from where?" she suddenly asked in a low tone.

"Oh, what does it matter? You wouldn't understand," Charlotte broke off irritably, in the very words her married cousin had compassionately addressed to her virginity.

A slow blush rose to Delia's cheek: she felt oddly humiliated by the rebuke conveyed in that contemptuous retort. She seemed to herself shy, ineffectual, as incapable as an ignorant girl of dealing with the abominations that Charlotte was thrusting on her. But suddenly some fierce feminine intuition struggled and woke in her. She forced her eyes upon her cousin's.

"You won't tell me who it was?"



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She Doesn't Know

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Yet even now those precious charms are threatened by Pyorrhea and she doesn't know her danger.

It is a grim fact that four out of five people who pass the age of forty are marked by Pyorrhea for its victims. Thousands younger also suffer. And in almost every case the disease might be prevented if heed were only paid to Nature's warnings.

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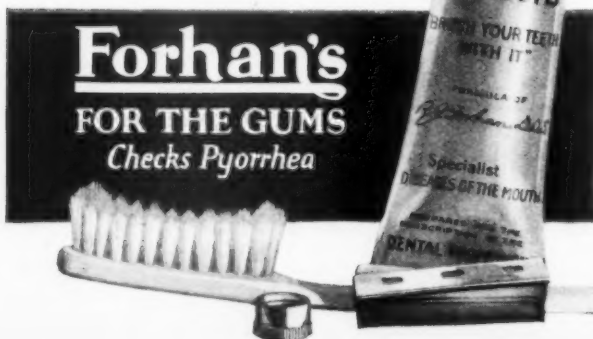
If they are tender, if they bleed easily when brushed, beware! That is the way Pyorrhea starts.

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"What's the use? I haven't told anybody."

"Then why have you come to me?" Charlotte's stony face broke up in weeping. "It's for my baby—my baby—"

Delia did not heed her. "How can I help you if I don't know?" she insisted in a harsh, dry voice: her heartbeats were so violent that they felt like a throttling hand at her throat.

Charlotte made no answer.

"Come back from where?" Delia doggedly repeated; and at that, with a long wail, the girl flung her hands up, screening her eyes. "He always thought you'd wait for him," she sobbed out, "and then, when he found you hadn't—and that you were marrying Jim— He heard it just as he was sailing. . . . He didn't know it till Mrs. Mingott asked him to bring the clock for your wedding—"

"Stop—stop," Delia cried, springing to her feet. She had provoked the avowal, and now that it had come, she felt that it had been gratuitously and indecently thrust upon her. Was this New York, her New York, her safe, friendly, hypocritical New York, was this James Ralston's house, and this his wife listening to such revelations of dishonor?

CHARLOTTE stood up in her turn.

"I knew it—I knew it! You think worse of my baby now, instead of better."

. . . . Oh, why did you make me tell you? I knew you'd never understand. I'd always cared for him, ever since I came out; that was why I wouldn't marry anyone else. But I knew there was no hope for me—he never looked at anybody but you. And then, when he came back four years ago, and there was no you for him any more, he began to notice me, to be kind, to talk to me about his life and his painting—" She drew a deep breath, and her voice cleared. "That's over—all over. It's as if I couldn't either hate him or love him. There's only the child now—my child. He doesn't even know of it—why should he? It's none of his business; it's nobody's business but mine. But surely you must see I can't give up my baby."

Delia Ralston stood speechless, looking away from her cousin in a grow-in horror. She had lost all sense of reality, all feeling of safety and self-reliance. Her impulse was to close her ears to the other's appeal as a child buries its head from midnight terrors. At last she drew herself up, and spoke with dry lips.

"But what do you mean to do? Why have you come to me? Why have you told me all this?"

"Because he loved you!" Charlotte Lovell stammered out; and the two women stood and faced each other.

Slowly the tears rose to Delia's eyes and rolled down her cheeks, moistening her lips. Through them she saw her cousin's haggard countenance waver and droop like a drowning face under water. Things half guessed, obscurely felt, surged up from unsuspected depths in her. It was almost as if, for a moment, this other woman were telling her of her own secret past, putting into crude words all the trembling silences of her heart.

The worst of it was, as Charlotte said, that they must act now; there was not a day to lose. Chatty was right—it was impossible that she should marry Joe if to do so meant giving up the child. But in any case, how could she marry him without telling him the truth? And was it conceivable that, after hearing it, he should not repudiate her? All these questions spun agonizingly through Delia's brain, and through them glimmered the persistent vision of the child—Clem Spender's child—growing up on charity, in a negro hovel, or herded in one of the plague-houses they called asylums. No: the child came first—she felt it in every fiber of her body. But what should she do, of whom take counsel, how advise the wretched creature who had come to her in Clement's name? Delia glanced about her desperately, and then turned back to her cousin.

"You must give me time. I must think. You ought not to marry him—and yet all the arrangements are made; and the wedding presents. . . . There would be a scandal. . . . It would kill Granny Lovell."

Charlotte answered in a low voice: "There is no time. I must decide now."

Delia pressed her hands against her breast. "I tell you I must think. I wish you would go home—or, no: stay here—your mother mustn't see your eyes. Jim's not coming home till late; you can wait in this room till I come back." She had opened the wardrobe, and was reaching up for a plain bonnet and heavy veil.

"Stay here? But where are you going?"

"I don't know. I want to walk—to get the air. I think I want to be alone." Feverishly she had unfolded her Paisley shawl, tied on bonnet and veil, thrust her mittened hands into her muff. Charlotte, without moving, stared at her dumbly from the sofa.

"You'll wait?" Delia insisted, on the threshold.

"Yes; I'll wait."

Delia shut the door and hurried down the stairs.

CHAPTER III

SHE had spoken the truth in saying that she did not know where she was going. She simply wanted to get away from Charlotte's unbearable face, and from the immediate atmosphere of her tragedy. Outside, in the open, perhaps it would be easier to think.

As she skirted the park-rails, she saw her rosy children playing, under their nurse's eye, with the pampered progeny of other Park-dwellers. The little girl had on her new plaid velvet bonnet and white tippet, and the boy his Highland cap and broadcloth spencer. How happy and jolly they looked! The nurse spied her, but she shook her head, waved at the group and hurried on.

She walked and walked through the familiar streets decked with bright winter sunshine. It was early afternoon, an hour when the gentlemen had just returned to their offices, and there were few pedestrians in Irving Place and Union Square. Delia crossed the Square to Broadway.



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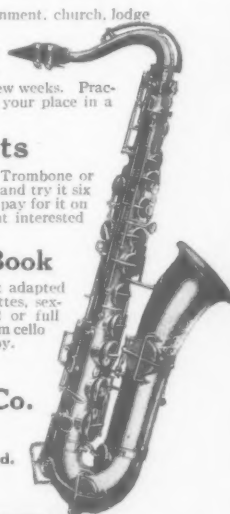
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"For whatever occasion she dresses, she does everything in her power to enhance her daintiness and feminine charm."

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"MY dear," said a very wise woman to her young friend, "there is something very important I want to tell you about—I wish I could talk to every girl just before she dresses for such occasions as a dinner party, a dance, or some other social gathering. A girl's great asset in life is her daintiness and feminine charm; and, for whatever occasion she dresses, she does everything in her power to preserve and enhance them."

"When preparing her toilette, she takes infinite pains with her gown, her hair, her hands, and the other little touches that mean so much."

"And yet after she has taken such pains, how often, as the evening wears on, and the odor of perspiration and other body odors begin to assert themselves—how often the effect of this careful toilette is greatly impaired!"

"She may not be conscious of it. But others notice it. If neglected, it affects her whole life most unfortunately. She has fewer intimate friends; she receives fewer invitations."

"And there's no need of this. These odors can be entirely kept away by using 'Mum,' the discovery of an eminent physician."

"Mum" is the word!

"APPLY a little 'Mum' once a day and you will be entirely free from all body odors the whole day and evening."

"There is not the slightest danger of injury. 'Mum' is a snow-white cream and does not irritate the skin nor even make it uncomfortable."

"And there's nothing in 'Mum' to stain or injure your clothes. You can put them on immediately after using 'Mum.'"

"So 'Mum' is the word for every woman who wants to be sure that no body odors can mar her natural daintiness and charm."

"And speaking of daintiness, reminds me of one other thing—the hair on the underarm. I would not advise you to shave it, for that makes it grow coarser. But you can use a depilatory—I prefer Evans's Depilatory because it comes as a complete outfit ready to use at the dressing table."

This woman might also have told her friend about a delightful talcum powder which is really a Perfume in Powder form—"Amoray," with the rich exotic fragrance that lasts all day."

Get these toilet helps at your drug- or department-store.

"Mum"—25c—including a pamphlet which

explains more fully why "Mum" is especially the friend of womankind.

Evans's Depilatory—a complete outfit, ready for your dressing table—75c.

"Amoray"—the distinctly feminine talc—35c.

Special Offer—Send us \$1.00 and your dealer's name and we will send all three to you postpaid.

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I enclose \$____. Please send me the articles checked below:

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MUM MFG CO 1102 Chestnut St PHILADELPHIA

Makers of "Mum," Amoray Talc (a powder perfume), Evans's Cucumber Jelly, Elderflower Eye Lotion

The Lovell house in Mercer Street was a sturdy, old-fashioned brick dwelling. A large stable adjoined it, opening on an alley such as Delia, on her honeymoon trip to England, had heard called a "mews." She turned into the alley, entered the stable court, and pushed open a door. In a shabby whitewashed room a dozen children, gathered about a stove, were playing with broken toys. The Irishwoman who had charge of them was cutting out small garments on a broken-legged deal table. She raised a friendly face, recognizing Delia as the lady who had once or twice been to see the children with Miss Charlotte.

DELIA paused, embarrassed.

"I—I came to ask if you need any new toys," she stammered.

"That we do, ma'am. And many another thing too, though Miss Charlotte tells me I'm not to beg of the ladies that comes to see our poor darlin's."

"Oh, you may beg of me, Bridget," Mrs. Ralston answered, smiling. "Let me see your babies—it's so long since I've been here."

The children had stopped playing, and huddled against their nurse, gazed up open-mouthed at the rich, rustling lady. One little girl with pale brown eyes and scarlet cheeks was dressed in a plaid alpaca frock trimmed with imitation coral buttons that Delia remembered. They had been on Charlotte's "best dress" the year she came out. Delia stooped and took up the child. Its curly hair was brown, the exact color of the eyes—thank heaven! But the eyes had the same little green spangles floating in their transparency. Delia sat down, and the little girl, standing on her knee, gravely fingered her watch-chain.

"Oh, ma'am—maybe her shoes'll soil your skirt. The floor aint none too clean."

Delia shook her head, and pressed the child against her. She had forgotten the other gazing babies and their wardress. The little creature on her knee was made of different stuff—it had not needed the plaid alpaca and coral buttons to single her out. Her brown curls grew in points on her high forehead, exactly as Clement Spender's did. Delia laid a burning cheek against the forehead.

"Baby want my lovely yellow chain?" Baby did.

Delia unfastened it and hung it about the child's neck. The other babies clapped and crowed, but the little girl, gravely dimpling, continued to finger the chain in silence.

"Oh, ma'am, you can't leave that fine chain on little Teeny. When she has to go back to those blacks—"

"What is her name?"

"Teena they call her, I believe. It don't seem a Christian name, har'ly."

Delia was silent.

"What I say is, her cheeks is too red. And she coughs too easy. Always one cold and another. Here, Teeny, leave the lady go."

Delia stood up, loosening the tender arms.

"She doesn't want to leave go of you, ma'am. Miss Chatty aint been in yet, and she's kinder lonesome without her. She don't play like the other children, somehow. . . . Teeny, you look at

that lovely chain you've got. . . . There, there now!"

"Good-by, Clementina," Delia whispered below her breath. She kissed the pale brown eyes, the curly crown, and dropped her veil on rushing tears. In the stableyard she dried them on her large embroidered handkerchief, and stood hesitating. Then with a decided step she turned toward home.

The house was as she had left it, except that the children had come in; she heard them romping in the nursery as she went down the passage to her bedroom. Charlotte Lovell was seated on the sofa, upright and rigid, as Delia had left her.

"Chatty—Chatty, I've thought it out. Listen: Whatever happens, the baby shan't stay with those people. I mean to keep her."

Charlotte stood up, tall and white. The eyes in her thin face had grown so dark that they seemed like spectral hollows in a skull. She opened her lips to speak; and then, snatching at her handkerchief, pressed it to her mouth and sank down again. A red trickle dripped through the handkerchief onto her poplin skirt.

"Charlotte—Charlotte!" Delia screamed, on her knees beside her cousin. Charlotte's head slid back against the cushions, and the trickle ceased. She closed her eyes, and Delia, seizing a vinaigrette from the dressing-table, held it to her pinched nostrils. The room was filled with an acrid aromatic scent.

Charlotte's lids lifted. "Don't be frightened. I still spit blood sometimes—not often. My lung is nearly healed. But it's the terror—"

"No, no: there's to be no more terror. I tell you I've thought it all out: Jim is going to let me take the baby."

The girl raised herself haggardly. "Jim? Have you told him? Is that where you've been?"

"No, darling. I've only been to see the baby."

"Oh!" Charlotte moaned, leaning back again. Delia took her own handkerchief, and wiped away the tears that were raining down her cousin's cheeks.

"You mustn't cry, Chatty; you must be brave. Your little girl and his—how could you think? But you must give me time: I must manage it in my own way. . . . Only trust me."

Charlotte's lips stirred faintly.

"The tears—don't dry them, Delia. I like to feel them."

THE two cousins leaned against each other without speaking. The ormolu clock ticked out the measure of their mute communion in minutes, quarters, a half-hour, then an hour: the day declined and darkened; the shadows lengthened across the garlands of the Axminster carpet and the broad white bed. There was a knock.

"The children's waiting to say their grace before supper, ma'am."

"Yes, Eliza. Let them say it to you. I'll come later." As the nurse's steps receded, Charlotte Lovell disengaged herself from Delia's embrace.

"Now I can go," she said.

"You're not too weak, dear? I can send for a coach to take you home."

"No, no; it would frighten Mother.

The Diary of a Lonesome Girl



April 12

Dear Diary:
I promised to tell you everything, Dear Diary, and I'm going to keep my promise. But it's awfully hard sometimes to write down just how I feel. For I am so discouraged. Met Edith Williams today on the car. She was going somewhere with Jimmy. And her clothes were so becoming that I envied her. My hair is prettier than Edith's, isn't it? And my eyes—and my complexion? Then why am I always so lonesome—so much alone? Can't you help me, Diary? Bobbie's better today.

April 15

More trouble, Diary. Mother said today that the money she'd saved for my new dress would have to go to pay Bobbie's doctor bill. I'm trying to be brave, Diary, but I'm so disappointed. I wanted to go to a dance on the 26th. Shall I go, Diary? I wonder if I can fix up that white organdie from last season?

April 18

Went to church this morning. Walked home with Alice Browning. Saw Jimmy. He's always with Edith Williams. Oh, if I only had some pretty clothes—just a few of them, Diary, how happy I would be! Mother tries so hard to save, but Dad never earned a large salary. And everything I earn goes toward keeping house. But I can still smile, can't I, Diary?

April 23

I've decided to wear my organdie to the dance. I do hope none of the girls remember it from last year. That new sash may help. Do men ever remember dresses, Diary? Jimmy will be there with Edith. Always Edith Williams. Oh, if I only had some becoming clothes!

April 27

I couldn't write to you last night, Diary—I just couldn't. I cried myself to sleep when I got home from the dance. Every girl had a new dress but me. I think Edith Williams' was best of all. Do you think Jimmy will marry her? He hardly looked at me last night. I came home all alone—so tired and discouraged. Isn't there something I can do to get pretty clothes?

May 15

Met Mrs. Peters today, with her two children. Poor woman—she hasn't had a new dress in years. She can't afford those in the shops and she can scarcely sew at all. I wish I could sew, Diary—then I could make my own clothes. Saw Jimmy walking down the street today while I was buying a magazine, but he didn't see me. I guess he was thinking of Edith Williams.

May 16

Remember that magazine I bought yesterday? Well, I sat up late last night reading it. I just couldn't put it down. For in it I found the story of a girl just like myself. She couldn't afford pretty clothes, either, and she was, oh, so discouraged. And then she learned of a school that teaches you, right at home, to make your own clothes for a half or a third of what you would pay in the shops. Do you think I could learn too, Diary? I'm going to find out anyway.

May 19

Early today the postman brought me a good thick letter from the Woman's Institute. I fairly snatched it from his hand. Guess he thought it was a love-letter. Why, Diary, do you know the Institute is the most wonderful school I ever heard of? Think of it, while I've been so unhappy, thousands of other girls have been learning right at home to make just the kind of pretty clothes they've always wanted, at oh! such wonderful savings. If they can do it, why can't I? I can, Diary, and I'm going to!

June 16

I know I've forgotten you for some time, Diary, but I've been awfully busy since I enrolled with the Woman's Institute. Think of it, Diary, I'm learning how to make the pretty clothes I have always wanted. I've finished the

first three lessons, and already I've made the prettiest blouse. Just think of being able to sew for yourself and have pretty things for just the cost of materials!

August 30

Well, it's happened, Diary. There was another dance last night and I wore my new dress. You should have seen the girls. They were so surprised. They all wanted to know where I bought it. And when I told them I had made it myself they would hardly believe me. And the men! Don't tell me they don't notice pretty things. My dance card was filled in five minutes. I've never had such a good time in my life. Jimmy and Edith aren't engaged yet, Diary. Jimmy's coming to see me on Wednesday night.

October 15

Here it is only the middle of October and already I have more pretty Fall clothes than I ever had in my life. And altogether they have cost me no more than one really good dress or suit would have cost ready made. Oh, there's a world of difference in the cost of things, Diary, when you make them yourself and pay only for the materials. Besides, I've made over all my last year's clothes—they look as pretty as the new ones and the expense of new trimmings and findings was almost nothing at all.

November 8

Awfully busy, Diary. I've started to sew for other people. I made a silk dress for Mrs. Scott and a blouse for Mrs. Perry last week. Mrs. Scott paid me \$10 and Mrs. Perry \$3.25. Think of it, Diary—little me who couldn't sew a stitch a few months ago, making clothes for other people. Mother just can't get over it. She's actually smiling these days. Says I'm going to earn \$30 a week, soon.

November 20

The most wonderful, wonderful thing has happened, Diary. Jimmy has asked me to marry him. It's to be in the spring, just as soon as I get my trousseau ready. Jimmy wanted to know what had caused the change in me and I told him all about the Woman's Institute. He wouldn't believe it until I showed him my lessons. He looked them over and then said they were so easy and simple that he thought he would take up dressmaking himself. Imagine Jimmy sewing, Diary!

November 26

Gladys Graham came in to see me today. I think she had been crying. Said she was discouraged because she didn't have pretty clothes. Then I told her all about the Woman's Institute. I think she's going to find out about it. I hope so. Think where I would be if I hadn't seen that magazine. Goodbye, Diary—Jimmy's here and I can't neglect him even for you.

What this "Lonesome Girl" has done you can do, too. There is not the slightest doubt of it. More than 125,000 women and girls, in city, town and country, have proved by the clothes they have made and the dollars they have saved, that you can easily learn at home, through the Woman's Institute, to make all your own and your children's clothes or prepare for success in the dressmaking or millinery profession.

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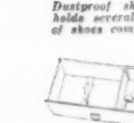
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And I shall like walking now, in the darkness. Sometimes the world used to seem all one awful glare to me. There were days when I thought the sun would never set. And then there was the moon at night." She laid her hands on her cousin's shoulders. "Now it's different. By and by I sha'n't hate the light."

The two women kissed each other, and Delia whispered: "Tomorrow."

CHAPTER IV

THE Ralstons gave up old customs reluctantly, but once they had adopted a new one, they found it impossible to understand why everyone else did not do likewise.

When Delia, who came of the laxer Lovells, and was naturally inclined to novelty, had first proposed to her husband to dine at six o'clock instead of two, his malleable young face had become as relentless as that of the old original Ralston in his grim Colonial portrait. But after a two days' resistance, he had come round to his wife's view, and now smiled contemptuously at the obstinacy of those who clung to a heavy midday meal and high tea.

"There's nothing I hate like narrow-mindedness. Let people eat when they like, for all I care: it's their narrow-mindedness that I can't stand."

Delia was thinking of this as she sat in the drawing-room (her mother would have called it the parlor) waiting for her husband's return. She had just had time to smooth her glossy braids, and slip on the black-and-white striped silk with cherry pipings which was his favorite dress. The drawing-room, with its Nottingham lace curtains looped back under florid gilt cornices, its marble center-table on a carved rosewood foot, and its old-fashioned mahogany armchairs covered with one of the new French silk damasks, in a tart shade of apple-green, was one for any young wife to be proud of. The rosewood whatnots on each side of the folding doors that led into the dining-room were adorned with tropical shells, feldspar vases, an alabaster model of the Leaning Tower of Pisa, a pair of obelisks made of scraps of porphyry and serpentine picked up by the young couple in the Roman Forum, a small bust of Clytie in biscuit de Sèvres, and four old-fashioned figures of the Seasons in Chelsea ware, that had to be left among the newer knick-knacks because they had belonged to Great-grandmamma Ralston. On the damask wall-paper hung large dark steel-engravings of Cole's "Voyage of Life," and on the table lay handsomely tooled copies of Turner's "Rivers of France," Drake's "Culprit Fay," Crabbe's "Tales," and "The Book of Beauty," containing portraits of the British peeresses who had participated in the Earl of Eglinton's tournament.

As Delia sat there, before the hard-coal fire in its arched opening of black marble, her citron-wood work-table at her side, and one of the new French lamps shedding a pleasant light on the center-table from under a crystal-fringed shade, she asked herself how she could have passed, in such a short time, so completely out of her usual circle of im-

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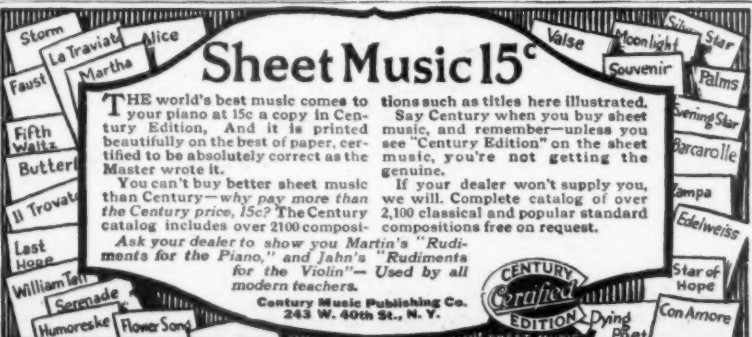
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pressions and convictions—so much farther than ever before beyond the Ralston horizon. Here it was, closing in on her again, as if the very plaster ornaments of the ceiling, the forms of the furniture, the cut of her dress, had been built out of Ralston prejudices, and turned to adamant by the touch of Ralston hands.

She must have been mad, she thought, to have committed herself so far to Charlotte; yet turn about as she would in the ever-tightening circle of the problem, she could still discover no other issue. Somehow, it lay with her to save Clem Spender's baby.

She heard the sound of the latchkey (her heart had never beat so high at it), and the putting down of a tall hat on the hall console—or two tall hats, was it? The drawing-room door opened, and two high-stocked and ample-coated young men came in—two Jim Ralstons, so to speak. Delia had never before noticed how much her husband and his cousin Joe were alike: it made her feel how justified she was in always thinking of the Ralstons collectively.

She would not have been young, and tender, and a happy wife, if she had not thought Joe but an indifferent copy of her Jim; yet allowing for defects in the reproduction, there remained a striking likeness between the two tall, athletic figures, the short, sanguine faces with straight noses, straight whiskers, straight brows, the candid blue eyes and sweet, selfish smiles. Only, at the present moment, Joe looked like Jim with a toothache.

"Look here, my dear: here's a young man who's asked to take potluck with us," Jim smiled, with the confidence of a well-nourished husband who knows that he can always bring a friend home unannounced.

"How nice of you, Joe! —Do you suppose he can put up with oyster soup and a stuffed goose?" Delia beamed upon her husband.

"I knew it! I told you so, my dear chap! He said you wouldn't like it—that you'd be fussed about the dinner. Wait till you're married, Joseph Ralston!" Jim brought down a genial paw on his cousin's bottle-green shoulder, and Joe grimaced as if the tooth had stabbed him.

"It's excessively kind of you, Cousin Delia, to take me in this evening. The fact is—"

"Dinner first, my boy, if you don't mind! A bottle of Burgundy will brush away the blue devils. Your arm to your cousin, please; I'll just go and see that the wine is brought up."

OYSTER soup, broiled shad, stuffed goose, corn fritters and green peppers, followed by one of Grand-mamma Ralston's famous caramel custards: through all her mental anguish, Delia was faintly aware of a secret pride in her achievement. Certainly it would serve to confirm the rumor that Jim Ralston could always bring a friend home to dine without notice. The Ralston and Lovell wines rounded off the effect, and even Joe's drawn face had mellowed by the time the Lovell Madeira started westward. Delia marked the change when



—and it's all so needless

A wakeful child—coughing. Father and Mother worried,—losing sleep. And it is all so needless.

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the two young men rejoined her in the drawing-room.

"And now, my dear fellow, you'd better tell her the whole story," Jim counseled, pushing an armchair toward his cousin.

The young woman, bent above her wool-work, listened with lowered lids and flushed cheeks. As a married woman—as a mother—Joe hoped she would think him justified in speaking to her frankly: he had her husband's authority to do so.

"Oh, go ahead, go ahead," chafed the exuberant after-dinner Jim from the hearth-rug.

Delia listened, considered, let the bridegroom flounder on through his exposition. Her needle hung like a sword of Damocles above the canvas: she saw at once that Joe depended on her trying to win Charlotte over to his way of thinking. But he was very much in love; at a word from Delia, she understood that he would yield, and Charlotte gain her point, save the child, and marry him.

How easy it was, after all! A friendly welcome, a good dinner, a ripe wine, and the memory of Charlotte's eyes—so

much the more expressive for all that they had looked upon. A secret envy stabbed the wife who had lacked this last enlightenment.

How easy it was—and yet it must not be! Whatever happened, she could not let Charlotte Lovell marry Joe Ralston. All the traditions of honor and probity in which she had been brought up forbade her to connive at such a plan. She could conceive—had already conceived—of high-handed measures, swift and adroit defiances of precedent, subtle revolts against the heartlessness of social routine. But a lie she could never connive at. The idea of Charlotte's marrying Joe Ralston—her own Jim's cousin—without revealing her past to him seemed to Delia as dishonorable as it would have seemed to any Ralston. And to tell him the truth would at once put an end to the marriage; of that even Chatty was aware. Social tolerance was not dealt in the same measure to men and to women, and neither Delia nor Charlotte had ever wondered why: like all the young women of their class, they simply bowed to the ineluctable.

No: there was no escape from the

dilemma. As clearly as it was Delia's duty to save Clem Spender's child, so clearly, also, she seemed destined to sacrifice his mistress. As the thought pressed on her, she remembered Charlotte's wistful cry. "I want to be married, like all of you," and her heart tightened. But yet it must not be.

"I MAKE every allowance," Joe was droning on, "for my sweet girl's ignorance and inexperience—for her lovely purity. How could a man wish his future wife to be—to be otherwise? You're with me, Jim? And Delia? I've told her, you understand, that she shall always have a special sum for her poor children, in addition to her pin-money—on that she may absolutely count. God! I'm willing to draw up a deed, a settlement, before a lawyer, if she says so. I admire, I appreciate her generosity. But I ask you, Delia, as a mother—mind you, now, I want your frank opinion. If you think I can stretch a point—can let her go on giving her personal care to the children until—until,"—a flush of pride suffused the potential father's brow—"till nearer duties claim her. . . . Why, I'm more than ready—if you'll tell her so. I undertake," Joe proclaimed, suddenly tingling with the memory of his last glass, "to make it right with my mother, whose prejudices, of course, while I respect them, I can never allow to—come between me and my own convictions." He sprang to his feet, and beamed on his dauntless double in the chimney-mirror. "My convictions," he flung back at it.

"Hear, hear!" cried Jim emotionally.

Delia's needle gave the canvas a sharp prick, and she pushed her work aside.

"I think I understand you both, Joe. Certainly, in Charlotte's place, I should never give up those children."

"There you are, my dear fellow!" Jim triumphed, as proud of this vicarious courage as of the perfection of the dinner.

"Never," said Delia. "Especially, I mean, the foundlings—there are two, I think. Those children always die if they are sent to asylums. That is what is haunting Chatty."

"Poor innocents! How I love her for loving them! That there should be such scoundrels upon this earth unpunished! Delia, will you tell her that I'll do whatever—"

"Gently, old man, gently," Jim admonished, with a flash of Ralston caution.

"Well, whatever—in reason—"

Delia lifted an arresting hand. "I'll tell her, Joe: she will be grateful. But it's of no use."

"No use? What more—"

"Nothing more—except this: Charlotte has had a return of her old illness. She coughed blood here today. You must not marry her."

There: it was done. She stood up, trembling in every bone, and feeling herself pale to the lips. Had she done right? Had she done wrong? And would she ever know?

Poor Joe turned on her a face as wan as hers: he clutched the back of his armchair, his head drooping forward like an old man's. His lips moved, but made no sound.

"My God!" Jim stammered. "But you know you've got to pull yourself together, old boy."

"I'm—I'm so sorry for you, Joe. She'll tell you tomorrow," Delia faltered, while her husband continued to proffer heavy consolations.

"Take it like a man, old chap. Think of yourself—your future. Can't be, you know. Delia's right—she always is. Better get it over—better face the music now than later."

"Now than later," Joe echoed with a tortured grin; and it occurred to Delia that never before in the course of his easy, good-natured life had he had—any more than her Jim—to give up anything his heart was set on. Even the vocabulary of renunciation, and its conventional gestures, were unfamiliar to him.

"But I don't understand. I can't give her up," he declared, blinking away boyish tears.

"Think of the children, my dear fellow; it's your duty," Jim admonished him, checking a glance of pride at Delia's wholesome comeliness.

In the long conversation that followed between the cousins—argument, counter-argument, sage counsel and hopeless protest—Delia took but an occasional part. She knew well enough what the end would be. The bridegroom who had feared that his bride might bring home contagion from her visits to the poor would not knowingly implant disease in his race. Nor was that all. Too many sad instances of mothers prematurely fading, and leaving their husbands alone with a young flock to rear, must be pressing upon Joe's memory. Ralstons, Lovells, Lannings, Archers, Van der Luydens—which one of them had not some grave to care for in a distant cemetery, graves of young relatives "in a decline," sent abroad to be cured by balmy Italy? The Protestant graveyards of Rome and Pisa were full of New York names; and the vision of that familiar pilgrimage with a dying wife was one to turn the most ardent Ralston cold. And all the while, as she listened with bent head, Delia kept repeating to herself: "This is easy; but how am I to tell Charlotte?"

When poor Joe, late that evening, wrung her hand with a stammered farewell, she called him back abruptly.

"You must let me see her first, please; you must wait till she sends for you." And she winced a little at the alacrity of his acceptance. But no amount of rhetorical bolstering-up could make it easy for a young man to face what lay ahead of Joe; and her final glance at him was one of compassion.

THE front door closed upon Joe, and she was roused by her husband's touch on her shoulder.

"I never admired you more, darling. My wise Delia!"

Her head bent back, she took his kiss, and then drew away. The sparkle in his eyes she understood to be as much an invitation to her bloom as a tribute to her sagacity.

"What should you have done, Jim, if I'd had to tell you about myself what I've just told Joe about Chatty?"

A slight frown showed that he thought the question negligible, and hardly in



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her usual taste. "Come!" His strong arm entreated her.

She continued to stand away from him, with grave eyes. "Poor Chatty! Nothing left now—"

His own eyes grew grave in sympathy. At such moments he was still the sentimental boy whom she could manage.

"Ah, poor Chatty, indeed!" He groped for the readiest panacea. "Lucky, after all, she has those paupers, isn't it? I suppose a woman *must* have children to love—somebody else's, if not her own." It was evident that the remedy had already relieved his pain.

"Yes," she agreed, "I see no other comfort for her. I'm sure Joe will feel that too. Between us, darling,"—and now she let him have her hands,—"between us, you and I must see to it that she keeps her babies."

"Her babies?" He smiled at the possessive pronoun. "Of course, poor girl! Unless she's sent to Italy?"

"Oh, she won't be that—where's the money to come from? And besides, she'd

never leave Aunt Lovell. But I thought, dear, if I might tell her tomorrow,—you see, I'm not exactly looking forward to my talk with her,—if I might tell her that you would let me look after the baby she's most worried about, the poor little foundling girl who has no name and no home,—if I might put aside a fixed sum from my pin-money—"

Their hands glowed together; she lifted her flushing face to his. Manly tears were in his eyes: ah, how he triumphed in her health, her wisdom, her generosity!

"Not a penny from your pin-money!"

She feigned discouragement and wonder. "Think, dear—if I'd had to give you up!"

"Not a penny from your pin-money, I say—but as much more as you need, to help poor Chatty's pauper. There—will that content you?"

"Dearest! When I think of our own upstairs!" They held each other, awed by that evocation.

To be continued in our next issue.



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COUSIN MAY

(Continued from page 74)

said Murchison to himself, and opened the pantry door. The elderly butler turned.

"Well, Miggs?" Murchison said.

"Yes, Mr. Roger," said the butler, putting down the culinary instruments and assuming his customary respectful attitude. "Just getting a bit of luncheon ready, sir. I hope you find yourself none the worse for what has happened, sir."

"I'm all right," said Murchison. "Miggs, how long have I been here?"

"Some days now, sir, I regret to say, sir," said Miggs.

"I see!" said Murchison. "I was given some sleeping potion, I suppose, and all this has been done while I have been unconscious. Very clever. And very considerate of my grafters to allow you to come with me. Were you drugged also, Miggs?"

"Why, no, sir," said Miggs. "I am sorry to say, Mr. Roger, I was not drugged."

"I see! You came voluntarily."

"In a manner of speaking, yes, Mr. Roger."

Roger looked at the butler sharply.

"Do you mean to tell me, Miggs," he asked, "that you are a party to this outrageous affair?"

"I fear that I shall have to confess that I am, Mr. Roger," said Miggs with distress. "I trust you will think no worse of me, sir; I meant all for the best, Mr. Roger. I beg you to believe that I have loved you like a father, ever since the day you were born, Mr. Roger. To see you sleepless, night after night, and nearing insanity, quite broke my heart, sir. And the Graft Syndicate did change all that, sir. It seemed a God's providence, Mr. Roger; and loving you as I do, I thought I could not do you a better turn, sir, than to give Miss Lind such aid as I could, when the occasion presented itself."

Murchison studied the honest face of his faithful butler and ended by smiling. With the annoyance that came from the knowledge that even Miggs the faithful had been corrupted, came also a delight in the thought that Rosa Lind's clever mind had accomplished even that miracle.

"I forgive you," he said; "and I could forgive you even more eagerly if this affair did not involve a young woman whose father placed her under my protection. This is an abduction affair, is it not? Miss Wiltson has been abducted; is that it?"

"Yes, Mr. Roger," said Miggs.

"And I am secluded here, and allowed to know I am secluded, so that I may know Miss Wiltson's father cannot reach me by hook or crook. Very pretty! And soon the threat will come that May Wiltson's father will be notified of her disappearance and my culpable carelessness unless I pay some outrageous amount."

"I believe that is the general idea, sir," said Miggs, "but I have a letter for you here, sir, that doubtless explains all."

From his pocket he took an envelope,

which he handed to Roger Murchison. The promoter of the Graft Syndicate tore open the envelope and read the letter. It said, in more specific terms, what he had already said. Miss Wiltson had been met at the train and was now in safe custody and would be held captive until Roger Murchison paid the sum of two hundred thousand dollars ransom.

"Excellent!" said Murchison. "Most cleverly planned and executed."

"I think so, indeed, sir," said Miggs.

"I have found the grafting parties exceedingly keen of mind. If I may venture a suggestion, sir, it is that you pay the sum mentioned immediately. I understand, sir, that fifty thousand dollars are to be added for each day you delay."

"That's it, is it?" said Murchison, smiling. "Well, Miggs, this graft business is a game, and this particular hand is not played out yet. I may win this one before the last card is played."

"Perhaps, sir," said Miggs, "but I would not be too confident of it. If it is not impertinent, sir, I would advise you to remember the ham you did not greatly fancy the taste of. I was guilty of drugging it, sir; and as I am to be your only source of food, sir, you can quite see that if you become too active, I shall be obliged, begging your pardon, to put you to sleep for another week or two."

Murchison, thrusting his hands into the pockets of his brown dressing-gown, smiled at the butler.

"Just so!" he said. "And quite right, since you are paid to do that by my opponents. The only question is, Miggs, how much are you to receive for it?"

"The sum of ten thousand dollars was mentioned, sir," said Miggs.

"Very tidy," said Murchison. "But I, Miggs, will give you twenty-five thousand dollars to desert my opponents and to help me instead."

Miggs wiped his hands carefully on a napkin and held his right hand toward Murchison.

"If it does not seem improper, Mr. Roger," he said, "I would like to shake hands on that, sir, to make it a binding bargain."

Murchison clasped the faithful fellow's hand.

"Thank you, sir," said Miggs. "And I have no compunction about playing false to the grafting parties, all being fair in the bunco business, when hands are not shaken, which they neglected to do."

WITH Miggs on his side, Roger Murchison felt that he had a fair chance to defeat Rosa Lind, for the butler was allowed to leave and enter the house at will. Murchison felt, too, that his knowledge of the place of May Wiltson's confinement was a strong trump card in his hand; but before deciding on any course of action, he went to his improvised study to think the matter over most carefully, for he had now no mean opinion of Rosa Lind's activities.

The simplest procedure. But to do so,

when his grafters were only following the rules he himself had laid down, would be pitifully cheap. Moreover, to call in the police would mean publicity and would perhaps jeopardize Miss Wiltson's reputation.

With the police put aside as out of the question, Murchison's next thought was of Alonzo Herris; and in Alonzo Herris, for over forty years the family lawyer of the Murchisons and a safe, elderly man, Roger saw the man to use in defeating the Graft Syndicate. He dipped his pen in ink and wrote, carefully and with exactly chosen words, the instructions he wished Alonzo Herris to follow. As far as possible he left no contingency uncovered.

In signing the letter Roger Murchison made sure his instructions would be obeyed, and did so in a most simple manner. Over the sixth letter of the name *Murchison*, he placed two minute dots, instead of the customary single dot.

THE use of this double dot had been agreed upon by Murchison and Alonzo Herris when Murchison first undertook maintaining a private graft syndicate, and the idea had been that of the wise old lawyer.

"If you go into this bunco affair," he said, "forgery will be one of the means your grafters will most likely use. Against that we must have some protection. We must have some secret mark, to be used only when our commands are of the utmost importance and to be unfaithfully obeyed."

It was the signature with this secret mark that Murchison used in signing the letter, and this letter he gave to Miggs to convey to Alonzo Herris. He gave the letter to Miggs when the butler brought the luncheon, and immediately after luncheon Miggs left the prison house with it.

For the greater part of the afternoon Roger Murchison paced the floor of his study nervously, waiting for five o'clock, and at exactly five o'clock he was delighted to see three large automobiles turn out of the avenue traffic and stop before the brownstone house opposite, and he smiled as he saw the elderly lawyer in the first car of the three, and the husky, businesslike appearance of the dozen men in that and the other cars.

Alonzo Herris mounted the steps to the door of the house opposite and pushed the bell-button. The man who opened the door, Mr. Murchison saw, was Mr. Carlo Dorio Skink. He could only guess at the short confab that ensued, but that it was satisfactory to Mr. Herris he had no doubt, for Mr. Skink closed the door, only to open it again a minute later and admit the old lawyer and all the husky men Mr. Herris had brought with him.

"Check!" said Roger Murchison. "It is your move now, Rosa Lind."

When the door of the house across the way opened again some minutes later, Mr. Herris was the first to come forth, but clinging to his arm was the veiled young woman Roger had seen enter the house. The lawyer and the lady were closely followed by the husky protectors, and all entered the cars and drove away, while Rosa Lind—he could not be mistaken—stood at a window and watched from between the slightly parted curtains.



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Just before she let the curtains fall together, Rosa Lind cast one glance toward the window where Roger Murchison stood.

"Checkmate, my dear," said Roger Murchison, but even as he said it, he thought he saw a look of triumph—a merry, teasing look—on Rosa Lind's face.

ON the top floor of the house opposite that in which Roger Murchison was a prisoner, the honest Miggs lay on the bare floor of an empty room, a gag in his mouth and his hands bound securely behind him.

Shortly after the departure of Alonzo Herris with the veiled lady, Horatio Tubbel—panting from the exertion of climbing the stairs—opened the door and released the honest Miggs.

"It's all right now, Miggs," he said, puffing at each word. "It's all over. You can go now."

"Thank you," said Miggs. "And a nice way to treat a man of my age, I must say!"

"All in the game, Miggsy—all in the game," said Mr. Tubbel. "And a good game it is, win or lose."

Miggs made no reply. He made his way out of the house and crossed the street, entering the house where Dan Fogarty still kept watch inside the door.

"Back, are you?" said Fogarty, and watched until Miggs disappeared around the turn of the stairway. Then Mr. Fogarty, opening the street door cautiously, went out of the house and disappeared. Miggs and Mr. Murchison were alone in the house, which was now unguarded and open to whoever chose to enter.

Hardly had Mr. Fogarty disappeared or Miggs reached the improvised study of Roger Murchison, when the doorbell jangled sharply and the noisy feet of a half-score men awakened the echoes of

the lower hall. Together Miggs and Murchison peered down the stairway, to see the gray-haired Alonzo Herris, his trusty men and the veiled lady.

"Ah, there you are!" cried Alonzo Herris as he spied Mr. Murchison above him. "A pretty roundabout route they brought me."

Roger Murchison hurried down the stairs.

"Roundabout or otherwise," he said, holding out a hand to the veiled lady, "any route is good that brings my cousin safely to me. For this is Miss Wiltson, is it not?"

"Miss Who?" ejaculated Alonzo Herris. "Miss Wiltson? Tut-tut, Roger! This is Miss Lind!"

The veiled lady removed the veil and showed a face neither man had seen before. Certainly she was not Rosa Lind, and although Mr. Murchison did not know it, she was not May Wiltson.

"What do you mean?" Murchison demanded of Mr. Herris. "This is not Rosa Lind."

"And what do you mean?" asked the old lawyer. "This is not Miss Wiltson. And I know it is not, for I have seen Miss Wiltson in your own home every day for some days now."

Roger Murchison drew a deep breath and looked from the unveiled lady to Mr. Herris and back again.

"And Miss Wiltson was not abducted?" Murchison asked slowly.

"Miss Wiltson abducted?" said Herris with annoyance. "What nonsense! Of course not. You are the person that was abducted."

"And who are you?" Murchison asked the unveiled lady.

"I? A friend of Rosa's," said the stranger.

"I see!" said Roger Murchison. "Very clever and very well played. And you, I suppose," he said, turning to Alonzo

Herris, "have paid some silly ransom for my release, while I was worrying over an abduction that never occurred. May I ask, my dear Herris, just how much my Graft Syndicate has won this time with your help?"

Alonzo Herris reddened.

"With my help?" he cried. "With my nothing. I paid for you, but I paid not a cent more than you commanded—not a dollar more than I was forced by your orders. This is your signature, is it not?"

Murchison took the paper. It was addressed to the old lawyer, and read:

By all you hold sacred I implore you to save my life. Rosa Lind has me in her power, and I shall be murdered unless you appear at the address below at five o'clock today. Be there without fail, with five hundred thousand dollars ransom, or I am a dead man.

The signature was his, with the two small dots above the sixth letter of Murchison.

"My own letter, cleverly washed, and with the new message cleverly written in," said Murchison. "I suppose," he added, "you needed this young army of men to carry the money?"

Again Mr. Herris colored.

"I took them for my own protection," he said angrily. "I had sense enough to know that if I was lost, all was lost."

"And as it is," said Murchison cheerfully, "I have been bunced out of only a trifling half-million dollars—which, with the addition of the equal sum due Rosa Lind and my Graft Syndicate under their contract, makes a cool million."

"With the addition, if I may make so bold as to mention it, sir," said Miggs respectfully, "of the little matter of twenty-five thousand dollars you promised me."

"Quite so, Miggs, quite so!" said Roger Murchison.

THOROUGHBREDS

(Continued from
page 45)

The most brilliant writers of the world vied with one another in describing that scene—Belmont bathed in the autumnal sunlight, half a million people gathered from the earth's four corners, the flags of six nations flung to the breeze.

Amid all that vast concourse the figure of Billy Van Buren was an object of general attention. Hundreds trailed him, eager for a word of assurance as to the chances of Viva Reina. To all inquiries he made the same reply: "The mare is ready and she'll do her best."

Sentiment rather than cold judgment

"Oh, Susannah"

GERALD BEAUMONT has written in "Oh, Susannah!" another delightful story of the race-track for the next, the March, issue of—

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

made the Queen a favorite in the betting at the start. As the hour for the race approached, British sportsmen undertook a financial offensive in behalf of Bright-hurst, the unbeaten black stallion; and the French and Canadian contingents unloosed a flood of coin in support of their respective entries. No one ever knew how much Van Buren actually wagered, but the rumor spread that his agents were operating under "no limit" instructions.

On his way to the paddock, Viva Reina's owner recognized Peggy Sheridan surrounded by a laughing group on the clubhouse gallery, and he bowed in acknowledgment of her greeting.

He found Viva Reina already in her stall, Sandy McKee hovering around her with all the tender solicitude of a mother applying the finishing touches to her daughter's bridal attire. Never had Viva Reina appeared more beautiful; never had the exquisite head been poised more regally, nor the luminous eyes expressed such passionate desire. Through the medium of that mysterious telepathy to which a race-horse is so sensitive, the daughter of Old Dominion and Empress

Lou understood that her great hour had come, and with expanding nostrils she welcomed the challenge.

It was a small thing that accentuated Sandy McKee's vague uneasiness. Some one had hung a silver and purple wreath over the stall, and a moment after the saddling bell rang, the wreath, loosened by the mare's impatient stamping, fell to the tanbark floor.

The trainer had never appeared superstitious before, and Van Buren was surprised to see him pay any attention to the incident. He strove to laugh away McKee's concern, but the old Scotchman shook his head dubiously.

"It isn't altogether that, Mr. Van Buren. It's just an uncomfortable feeling I've got. Trainers get hunches, you know. I'd give anything in the world if the Queen didn't have to start."

The call to post sounded. There was a rush in the direction of the grandstand. McKee swept a final caressing hand over the smooth coat of Viva Reina—a caress that was almost like a farewell. He drew a rough hand hastily across his eyes, and handed the reins to Billy Van Buren

"Lead her out, sir," he invited. "There's your winner, the greatest thoroughbred in the history of the world!"

Van Buren thrust out a quick hand, and McKee took it.

"Sandy," declared the younger man, "I'm learning more about thoroughbreds every day." And with that enigmatic statement, Billy Van Buren took his place at the head of the procession and led the way toward the track. At the gate he surrendered the mare to the diminutive Tad Miller, her accustomed rider, and made his way hurriedly to the gallery reserved for owners opposite the judges' stand.

WHEN they paraded past on their way to the barrier which marked the starting point of the mile-and-a-quarter struggle, every jockey was clad in the national colors of his country, and for the first time in modern turf annals, the stable colors were restricted to the plaited manes of the contenders. Viewing the mighty Brighthurst, cantering second in the line, and followed by the regal Don Pedro and the powerful Beau Monde, each carrying but five pounds more than the mare, the latter's owner appreciated keenly the heroic task that confronted the American Queen.

A moment later McKee squirmed his way up the staircase, accompanied by an expert clocker commissioned to call off the time by quarters.

It seemed that the field was at post for an hour, but in reality it was only a matter of four minutes. While thousands of glasses were leveled at the plunging, twisting barricade of color, suddenly it crumbled and spread, a volcanic roar ascended to the skies, and the race of the century was on.

The Argentine and Canadian colors broke first, Rio Norte and St. Egwin off flying and setting a terrific pace, Beau Monde, carrying the Tricolor and lapping the leaders, and Brighthurst and Viva Reina running nose and nose at the flank of the French entry.

They made the first quarter in twenty-three seconds, and then Rio Norte faltered perceptibly. St. Egwin's head showed in front, with Beau Monde moving up.

At the second quarter, reeled off in twenty-three and one-fifth, the Canadian horse cracked under the terrific pace and fell back, the French stallion taking command, half a length in front of Viva Reina, the latter still a nose in front of Brighthurst.

At the five-eighths pole the field shifted again. This time it was the Tricolor that surrendered, and to the American mare. The great band, marshaled at the staircase, caught the signal and struck up "Dixie," but the strains were drowned in the roar of the multitude.

Billy Van Buren, watching through his glasses, estimated the positions:

"Reina a nose, Brighthurst second by a length, France third by three lengths."

The two leaders, running as though they were harnessed, made the far turn and flashed past the mile post. The roaring swelled like an organ note. The race lay between England and America.

"Mile in thirty-five," called the clocker.

A smothered exclamation burst from Sandy McKee: "Pray for a slow eighth,"

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THE TULLOSS SCHOOL, 233 College Hill, Springfield, Ohio

he begged, "a slow eighth, or the Queen is gone!"

But that slow eighth never came. Lord Cumberland's jockey knew his business. He was astride a superhorse, and he acted accordingly. With horror-stricken eyes Billy Van Buren and old Sandy McKee saw the British colors dip deeper in the saddle, saw the jockey's cap go down to the powerful black neck, and realized that even with that heart-breaking mile back of them, the boy on Bright-hurst was now making his move.

IT was a royal challenge hurled by an equine king at a thoroughbred queen, and right royally it was met. In the deep bosom of Viva Reina was a magic quality which made surrender impossible. Into the stretch they swung, Bright-hurst on the right, the American colors on the rail.

The clocker's voice cut through the maelstrom: "Eighth in eleven seconds flat!"

McKee cried out in anguish: "It's murder! Pull her in, Tad—let him have it. Ease her up, boy!"

The feeble shout was lost in the storm. It would have made no difference had it been heard. With delicate ears flattened to her head and velvet eyes rolled back defiantly at her foe, Viva Reina held to the slender lead, and no mortal arms could have restrained her.

In that last staggering eighth of a mile from paddock to wire, with the multitude gone mad, Sandy McKee clutched at Billy Van Buren and screamed into the latter's ear:

"They haven't a thing left; they're finishing on class alone. Look at 'em!"

The straining eyes of the American speed king beheld then a sight he was never to forget: Lord Cumberland's jockey plying whip and arm and heel and spur, tiny Tad Miller doubled frantically on the mare's heaving shoulders, and two gallant animals, far past the limit of their speed and endurance, rolling and bumping desperately onward after the manner of those who:

*Hold on when there is nothing in them
Except the Will which says to them:
"Hold On!"*

And in this manner, long after heart and nerve and sinew had served their turn, under the wire first, by the grace of two blood-red nostrils, flashed Viva Reina!

Up shot the blast of a half-million throats; down dropped the white figures 1:50 3-5, spelling a new world's record; the musicians launched into the National Anthem; the joyous multitude rubbed shoulders in a common rush toward the charmed winner's circle, eager to acclaim America's matchless Queen.

It was a small thing that brought the first hush to those who were quick of eye, the sight of a hatless, gray-haired trainer running shakily up the center of the track toward the turn where the field was slowing up—then grooms and hostlers, vaulting the rail, hurried in the same direction. After them appeared the figure of Billy Van Buren, moving at top-speed away from the stands toward a blotch of color on the ground partly hidden by the curve of the fence.

The hush spread into a vast blanket of silence that descended upon beautiful Belmont like a shroud. Men turned to each other and whispered, "What's happened—what's wrong?" and they got no answer. One after another Bright-hurst, Beau Monde, Don Pedro, St. Egwin and Rio Norte came cantering back, but the flower-laden winner's circle remained without an occupant. Mercifully screened from the gaping thousands, Viva Reina had dropped with a shattered heart.

Five minutes dragged by, and an usher made his way from the judges' pagoda to the bandstand. The leader whispered his instructions; there was a hurried turning of pages, an adjustment of instruments, and then the musicians arose bareheaded. In the first strains of the death march, the great crowd understood that Nature's laws had been transcended, and the Queen of the Thoroughbreds had answered with her life.

When the last note had died away, hundreds went in search of Viva Reina's owner to express to him their sympathy, but Billy Van Buren had disappeared.

AT ten o'clock the next night, in the library of one of New York's most famous bankers, a pioneer business man, approaching the end of a long and arduous struggle, faced courageously a group of the city's financial wizards. In the patient silence with which they heard him he read defeat, but he talked valiantly on.

Finally a gray-haired man at the head of the table interrupted. "We had rather hoped for some more constructive suggestions," he said gently. "Have you no resources other than these mentioned?"

"Only one," responded Drexel Van Buren, and he smiled a little wistfully as a man does who surrenders a treasured task to stronger hands. He laid one hand on the shoulder of a young man at his side, and again faced the gathering. "Gentlemen," he said, "my son." And Billy Van Buren rose to his feet.

He was a trifle nervous at first, but presently he struck his stride and was smiling at them with frank boyishness.

"Why, it's like this, you see," he explained. "Life is a good deal like a race-course, full of sprints, and handicaps and stake events, and it takes us some little time to get our bearings, learn our lessons, and discover in what event we are best fitted to start. Right now, Father is entered in a race under rather trying conditions. He's been campaigning a long time—a little too long, perhaps, to carry successfully all the weight that's assigned to him; so I'm going to start too; it will be a sort of stable entry, you know."

"You?" questioned the man at the head of the table.

"Yes," said Billy Van Buren. "Last night and today I arranged to dispose of my stables, my planes, my cars, my cruisers, my farm—everything by which the public identifies me. I'll sell these clothes if anybody wants them. The only thing I won't sell is this": He drew aside his coat and revealed a small bow fashioned of silver and purple ribbon.

"I took that from the mane of Viva Reina," he said with assumed lightness, "and I rather expect to wear it always—henceforth."

The president of the banking house of Dwight Robinson and Company stirred in his seat. "May I ask," he said, "just how much money you expect to realize from your personal holdings, and are we to understand that you contemplate putting it all into the business?"

"Certainly," said Billy Van Buren. "The firm needs about seven million in cash. Father has three million in Liberties which can be disposed of at ninety-three, and there is another half-million in easily convertible assets. I won a half-million yesterday and expect to realize close to a million from my personal belongings. I ask an extension on the balance due, and for security offer the reputation and tangible assets of an old-established firm, together with my personal services."

"Ah!" said the man at the head of the table with a smile, "you are entering the firm yourself?"

"Of course," assured Van Buren, "I shall probably be bumped around a bit at first, but I've got my father's blood in me, and his knowledge of the track. This much I know already: if you let us go to the wall, the South American trade falls into British hands, and you, as bankers, can't afford to let that happen. Dalrymple left us as part of a conspiracy; well, I'm here to take his place. Load all the weight on me you want; name an advisory committee to guard against mistakes and to tell me what to do, and I'll give you everything that's in me, and maybe a little bit more."

The chairman directed a questioning glance around the table. He counted the nods of approval and found them in the majority. His tired eyes lighted.

"H'm," he commented, "the situation seems to be clearing up."

A YOUNG man entered the room and laid a card in front of the chairman, but before the latter had time to read the name, the door was opened by Peggy Sheridan herself.

The daughter of Senator Sheridan, attired in a motor costume that bore fresh streaks of mud and oil, strode straight up to the man who was on his feet.

"I'd have got here sooner," she said hurriedly, "only I blew a tire and the darned car turned over. Father told me where to find you. He says you've sold everything. Billy—you're in trouble!"

"Not exactly that," demurred Van Buren. "I'm merely an overnight entry in a new race. These gentlemen are going to back me, I think, as the new general manager of Van Buren and Company, and I'm surrendering speed in favor of class."

Miss Sheridan's eyes sparkled. "Can I help?" she asked. "Give me fifteen days, and I can throw two million into the pot—thirty days, and I'll bet I can do shorthand and typewriting. Now don't reject the offer, Billy, in the presence of everybody!"

"Lord God!" exclaimed Billy Van Buren. "Peggy!"

The president of the Columbia Trust Company leaned over and addressed the senior member of the firm of Dwight Robinson. "No wonder we won the war," he whispered, "when we have children like that, eh?"

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CLOCKWORK

(Continued from
page 84)

the safe and opening it, displaying the pendant in all its luster.

He handed the case to the clergyman. "Put it in the safe, for luck," he urged. "And fasten the door."

The clergyman, humoring the whim of his host, took the receptacle from Burr's hand, glanced admiringly at the pendant, closed the case and laid it again on the center shelf of the safe. Then he shut the safe door, tried it and found it was locked fast.

Kahn, who had been eying the silly ceremony with growing impatience, made his farewells and followed Mrs. Frayne out onto the porch. Burr, picking up hat and dustcoat, went out with them, said good-by to his wife on the veranda and then helped the clerical couple into his own car, which he had brought out from the garage before lunch, in preparation for his drive to town. Getting into the front seat, he piloted the machine out into the highroad, midway between the departing cars of Kahn and Mrs. Frayne.

Leaving the clergyman and his helpmeet at the door of the parsonage, Burr turned his face toward the city fifty miles distant.

THE directors' meeting of the Steeloid Company, that night, had a session which might have been less stupid but for Burr's delaying proceedings more than once by a side-chat with some fellow-director on the theme of diamond-boarding. But promptly at eleven the directors adjourned, and Alan Burr went around the corner to where his car was parked.

The chairman of the board lived a mile to northward, directly on Burr's homeward route. Alan gave him a lift to the door, and then continued his own drive. This was not the first nor the tenth time that Burr had made the motor-journey from the city to his house. But never before had the wontedly staid car been pushed to such a pace as now. At more than one lonely stretch of country road the speedometer registered fifty-five miles to the hour.

As a result he drew near to Paignton in something better than an hour and a half, as compared with his average two hours. And into a lonely lane-head, a furlong from home, he drove, at just half past twelve o'clock. Here he stopped and switched off all lights, leaving the car, he moved with stealthy haste, through back ways, to his own house. Arrived in the yard, he kicked off his shoes. Then he tiptoed to a bay window of the living-room and stood listening.

The night was dead silent. There was not a lighted window in the house. Bess, as he knew, was a profoundly heavy sleeper. The maids' quarters were at the far end of the house.

Softly he pushed upward on the lower sash of one of the windows in the bay. The old-fashioned fastening was secured by screws. These screws, the preceding night, he had loosened in their sockets until they barely held the catch in place. Under the pressure of his upward shove, they deserted their sockets, and the sash

slid upward noiselessly, along its new-oiled grooves.

Again Burr paused to listen. Then he wriggled silently in through the gap and stood on the floor of the living-room. Thanks to days of surreptitious tests, he knew how to avoid the few creaky boards. His stockinged feet padded across to the safe.

Burr knelt, twiddled the knob and made the set turns with rhythmic perfection. The steel door swung wide. The groping fingers found the morocco case and abstracted it.

Burr paused only long enough to open the case and make sure its precious contents were there. Then, leaving the safe ajar, he shuffled back to the window. On the way he took the pendant out of its resting-place, pocketed it and laid the morocco case, open, on the floor.

Once more he paused at the window. From his pocket he took his tiny screwdriver and tightened into place the screws in the catch. Climbing out onto the veranda, he closed the window behind him. With the butt of his screwdriver he gave the upper pane a smart tap. The glass broke. He tapped again. A bit of glass, about the size of his fist, tinkled to the floor.

Running at top speed, he fled toward the garage, grabbing up his discarded shoes as he went. In the shadow he crouched, staring at the darkened house. No light flashed in any of its windows. No sound, as of prowlings of an awakened sleeper, reached him through the open windows of his wife's upper room. After a minute of tense waiting, Burr crept into the garage and to the loft above.

Thence, in another minute, he emerged, stooped to put on his shoes, and made all haste from the grounds toward the waiting car in the head of the lane a furlong away.

A LITTLE later the local night watchman was making his scheduled patrol of the street on which stood the Burr house. He was a conscientious man, this defender of the village's safety, and his nightly rounds were made with clocklike regularity.

Tonight, as he came almost abreast of Burr's pretty home, the watchman heard a car chugging along the road behind him. At the same moment the machine slowed down for the turn into the Burr grounds.

"Good evening!" called Alan from the driving-seat. "I had to stay late in the city tonight. I'm glad you're on the job."

"I was only just passing your house," replied the man. "I kind of stopped, when I saw your car coming up. I got too many houses to look out for, to stand any time in front of one of 'em—specially in these burglar-scare days. Good night."

"Good night!" Burr called back as he piloted the car into the drive and toward the house.

The watchman had not plodded fifty yards farther, along his dull beat, when he was brought to a halt by an imperative yell. He recognized Burr's voice, shout-

ing his name in loud panic. And the man rushed back at full tilt across the lawns, toward the direction whence the cry had come.

Burr himself came running to meet him. "Hurry!" sputtered Alan, seizing the watchman's arm and hauling him toward the porch. "Hurry, can't you? I'm—I'm afraid my house has been entered. As I came up the drive, the car lights fell on that bay-window, yonder. And I saw a chunk of glass had been knocked out, just above the fastening. So I hopped down and bawled for you. Come along!"

ONE week later, a glum insurance-adjuster was making his final report in the main offices of the Indestructible Insurance Company, for the benefit of two equally glum high officials of the concern.

"No," the adjuster was saying, "I'm afraid you're right. There's no way out. It's as clean a case as we've ever handled. Just review it again for yourselves: Burr takes out this theft policy, through Colliver, buys the swad of jewelry, and stands for the whacking big premium we charged on it. He buys it. Pays Blankenby's the full \$24,386 he insured it for. His check and Blankenby's bill-of-sale prove that. He takes the pendant home, shows it to the bank cashier, then takes it to his own house to show to his wife, and only misses getting it back to the bank that day because his clock goes slow. His wife and one of his servants testify the clock has had a way of going slow. Gives the pendant to the pastor of his church,—in the presence of the mayor of his burg,—and the minister puts it in the safe, and locks the safe. Burr leaves home right afterward. His wife knows the combination. But she takes oath—and she's telling the truth—that she never touched the safe again that day. She hasn't the brain to play the crook and then go through the grilling cross-exam I gave her.

"The only other person who knows the combination is Burr himself. And his movements are known, every second, from that time till the discovery of the robbery. The village cop even saw him come home from town, and got the alarm, half a minute later. No, there isn't a loophole anywhere. It's a square loss. Any court on earth would give the money to him. He—"

"Have you asked him if he'll accept another pendant of equal value, instead of the cash?" ventured one of the two glum officials. "We can get a bigger discount on such things at—"

"He says he won't," returned the adjuster. "He was all het up with a plan to put his cash into diamonds. His neighbors testify to this too. But now he says one single experience has cured him of that craze. He wants the actual money. And by the terms of our policy, we've got to give it to him."

The second of the two glum officials groaned dramatically, reached out and countersigned a check that lay on the table in front of him.

"Here you are," he grunted. "Take it round to him. We can't sidestep. I've been all over your report and the affidavits. There's nothing known against him in business or in private life. And when clergymen and mayors and bank cashiers are among the material witnesses in a man's behalf, there can't be any question of collusion. You're right. It's a clean case. Take the check to his office. Get him to write a testimonial, telling how promptly we paid up. That may be worth one-tenth per cent of what we're paying out to him. Better take it over, now. You may catch him before he goes to lunch."

But the adjuster did not catch Alan Burr before the latter went to lunch. For that day, as usual, Burr lunched early. Living nearly two hours' train-ride from his office and getting to work at nine o'clock, he found himself hungry, as a rule, long before twelve.

Today, as Burr dawdled over his coffee, he wondered happily at the great feeling of peace that had come over him of late. He felt not the faintest twinge at what he had done. The Insurance Company's ads spoke of the many hundred thousand dollars' worth of "surplus" on its books. Out of this surplus, of course, he was to be paid. To whom did the surplus belong? To nobody. That is, to no one person or actual group of people. Its annual interest alone would far outweigh the trifling \$24,386, he was to receive.

Moreover, he had done real good. He had helped bolster poor old Colliver's tottery job, and had won for the luckless dotard the percentage on a pretty big burglary-insurance policy, apart from the five-thousand-dollar life policy Burr had taken out through him.

FROM self-approval for his own goodness he drifted for the hundredth time into joyous contemplation of his skill in engineering the whole clever thing. Everything had worked out on schedule, from the repeated setting back of the clock to the breaking of the window-glass. It had gone through as smoothly as clockwork. All it had called for was a little ingenuity in paving one's way.

The garage loft was a cubbyhole never ransacked or even entered, except when it served Bess as a dumping-place for household odds and ends. The garage loft, particularly the spot in the garage loft so cleverly picked out by him, was the ideal hiding-place of all others, for the time. A little later he could smuggle the pendant into the deposit box at the bank, in some sheaf of supposedly important papers. This, when all possible chance for suspicion should have blown over.

Then, next season, he would have to go to Europe for a month, on business for the firm. That had been settled on, long before this idea of his had been born. He could take the diamonds with him, first prying them out of the pendant. He had read that at Antwerp there were dealers who pay snug sums for unset diamonds, and who ask few questions.

The transaction ought to net him somewhere around eighteen thousand dollars, at the very least. A few more deals of the sort, and he could laugh at the penniless-old-age bogey.

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Alan Burr finished his coffee, paid his check and strolled lazily back to work, at blessed peace with himself and with all mankind. He got out of the elevator, at his floor, still in that blissful reverie, and he swung open the door of his office.

There were two people in the outer room. One was a large young man who was twisting a spill of paper between his fingers and who gazed in unbelieving delight at a pretty woman of forty or so.

THE woman was talking volubly. By the time Burr's startled senses had focused on the fact that this garrulous person was his wife and that the object of her oration was the insurance adjuster, Bess turned and caught sight of her husband.

"Oh, Alan, darling!" she chortled, making a rush at him, and spilling an avalanche of uncheckable talk as she advanced. "Oh, Alan! The greatest, wonderfulest news, dear! I wanted to see your face when I told it. So I came right in, instead of telephoning. I couldn't bear not to see your face when I told you. Miss Sisson said you'd be back from lunch presently. So I waited. Then Mr. Humiston, here, came in, and I've just been telling him all about it. And he's as happy over it as we are. And so I—"

"Providence must have given you some brains, at birth," snapped Burr in a gust of puzzled anger. "And you can't have used them all up, yet. So suppose you stop jabbering and tell me what you are driving at?"

"The clock!" she prattled, resolved not to be balked of her dramatic recital. "You know you said I mustn't get it fixed by the Paignton man. And I felt I couldn't rely on it. And my watch never did keep time. And this morning, all at

once I happened to remember the old beehive clock. You know—the one we put in the garage loft last year, when it stopped going. Well, I thought if I could take it around to the Paignton clock-man, he might fix it so it would keep some sort of time, till you could send for a man from Blankenby's to fix the big one. And I—"

She hesitated. Her husband's face had taken on the color of a corpse's. His jaw was hanging. His eyes were glazed. He began to shake, very gently, as a man in the first stages of creeping paralysis. The gruesome sight shocked his wife to a momentary pause in her glowing epic. Then, deciding Alan was merely excited over her dramatic way of leading up to the climax, she resumed gleefully:

"I opened the beehive clock, to dust it out, before I took it over to be mended. And down in the bottom of it, under the pendulum, there was a crumple of wrapping-paper. I wondered what it was doing there, because the pendulum couldn't move without hitting the edge of it. So I pulled it out. And underneath—in the very bottom of the clock—what do you suppose I found? What do you suppose, Alan? But you'd never guess in a trillion years! The pendant!"

Alan Burr's glazed and bloodshot gaze was no longer riveted in fascinated horror on her flushed face. Instead he seemed actually to be wearying of her wonderful story. For slowly, like a run-down automaton, his ghastly face was turning toward the other man.

The insurance adjuster was playing with a slip of paper. He had rolled it into a tube. Now he unrolled it and began, very deliberately, to tear it into many tiny fragments.

And Burr saw that the slip of paper was a check.

THE LEEDS BANK ROBBERY

(Continued from page 40)

"I should want to know a little more about the two tourists on their way to Scotland."

"Then you're as big a fool as the police," he retorted gruffly. "They hadn't nothing to do with it. They were filling up with petrol and neither of them budged from the car."

I smiled in a superior way and went on sketching. He watched me with thinly veiled anxiety.

"Toffs they were," he went on, "on their way up for a bit of sport."

"Maybe," I commented. "They didn't seem in any hurry about it."

"What do you mean?"

"I don't see why they stayed at the Queen's two nights," I remarked.

"Who said they did?" he demanded.

"They stayed one night, and grumbled at having to do that."

"How do you know?" I asked, looking up at him.

"I spoke to the chauffeur," he replied sullenly. "He told me my oil was leaking."

I changed the subject, finished my ridiculous sketch, and handed over the five

pounds. That night I caught the mail train to Scotland. . . .

It took me less than a week to discover the whereabouts of the man and the woman who I learned were passing under the name of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Grover. On the morning after my arrival at the very remote corner of Scotland where they had taken up their temporary abode, I committed an indiscretion. I donned a knickerbocker suit and set out for a tramp over the moors. I had just clambered up to the top of a little ridge overlooking the sea, when I came face to face with a little party ascending it from the other side. The little party consisted of the person I had known chiefly as Mr. Stanfield, his wife, a villainous-looking gillie, and two dogs. It was a curious moment, full of the suggestions of tragedy, afterward ridiculous in its conventionality. I saw the flash of the man's gun, and I saw the woman's hand restrain him, heard the single word whispered in his ear. I raised my cap; he followed suit. His gun hung idly under his arm. My hand was inside my breast-pocket, clutching something hard.

"What an extraordinary meeting!" Janet exclaimed with a faint smile. "So you sometimes take a holiday also, Sir Norman?"

"Sometimes," I admitted. "I came home unexpectedly from Norway. I was disappointed in my fishing."

"Are you aware that you're trespassing, mon?" the gillie demanded severely.

"I'm afraid I didn't know it," I replied. "There were no notices."

"It doesn't matter," Janet intervened. "We happen to be walking up a covey of birds this way."

"I put nothing up," I assured them. "They lie verra close hereabouts," the gillie observed. "We'll take a little further sweep."

"How long are you staying in these parts, Sir Norman?" Stanfield inquired.

"About a week, if I like the golf," I answered.

"I've taken the Lodge, down there," he pointed out. "Call and see us before you leave."

"Won't you come and dine with us tonight?" Janet invited, with a challenge in her eyes.

I hesitated. The invitation appealed to me in one way as much as it repelled me in another. Stanfield watched me as though he were reading my thoughts.

"You need not take salt," he said grimly.

"I shall be delighted," I assented. "About eight o'clock I suppose?"

"Not 'about,' I implore you," Janet answered earnestly. "Sandy shall catch you some trout this afternoon, and they must be served to the second. Say a quarter to eight, please."

"I will be punctual," I promised.

I SPENT the afternoon wandering about the moor, inspecting the golf links and speaking on the telephone. Punctually at twenty minutes to eight I passed up the long, neglected drive and presented myself at the front door of the somber-looking house. The summons of a harsh bell was answered almost immediately by an immaculate butler. Janet, from the other end of the cool white hall, came forward to meet me. The dinner was well cooked; the champagne was excellent; and my host, with a twinkle in his eyes, called my attention to the fact that it was opened in my presence. As soon as the last course was concluded, Janet led the way out onto the flagged terrace, where a table was already arranged with dessert and coffee.

"You are a brave man, Sir Norman," my hostess said abruptly.

"Why?" I asked.

"You know—and you alone—that I once killed a man—although you don't altogether know why," she went on softly. "How do you know that I have not within me the makings of a modern Lucrezia? I have read quite a good deal about poisons,—I may be said even to have studied the subject,—and you have delivered yourself into my hands."

"Why should you poison me?" I argued. "I will do both you and your husband the credit to believe that you don't bear malice. Revenge is a senseless sentiment."

My host leaned forward in his chair. His face was solemn and brooding.

"You have things against me dating from far back," he said.

I nodded.

"But I am in the same position as Scotland Yard," I reminded him. "For those things I have no case. For those misdemeanors of which I suspect you in the past, I could at the present moment go only so far as to procure a warrant charging you with feloniously wounding a police inspector. For the rest, I suspect but I have no proof."

"You suspect what?" he asked.

I shook my head.

"There are limits to my candor," I protested mildly. "You must admit that I am not secretive or unduly aloof, inasmuch as I dine at your table, discuss your peccadilloes and pass on, like an ordinary guest. What I may suspect of the past I keep to myself. I am your enemy, and you know it. If it pays you to attempt to murder me, I imagine you will try."

"Janet would desert me if I did," he declared with a grim smile. "She finds these little conferences with you so inspiring."

She looked at me with that wonderful smile of hers. She was a little way behind a pillar, and her face was hidden from her husband.

"I do not like to hear you say that we are enemies," she murmured. "I would rather think that we are like the soldiers who fight in two opposing armies. We fight because it is our duty. So we are enemies because it is our duty. Even that does not interfere with personal feelings."

"That is true," I admitted carelessly. "I could never absolutely dislike a man who played such good golf as your husband."

"And what about me?" she demanded.

"You drive me to be obvious," I replied. "No one could possibly dislike a person who contributed to the beauty of the world."

She laughed softly.

"Why, you are a courtier, Sir Norman," she declared. "Your compliments and the perfume of those roses and the flavor of the Benedictine are getting into my head. I begin to picture you as the serpent who has crawled into this Utopian paradise."

"Talking about golf," her husband intervened in a harsh tone, "what about a game, Sir Norman? Will you play me tomorrow morning?"

"With pleasure," I assented.

"At ten o'clock?"

"I will be in the clubhouse," I promised him.

"We go to bed, up here," he remarked, "practically with the sun."

I rose to my feet. I took my leave, and as I walked down the drive, with the yellow moon shining through the sparse trees, I felt the ghosts of tragedy gathering.

AT five minutes to ten on the following morning I watched Mr. James Stanfield push open his private gate leading onto the links, and stroll across toward the clubhouse. I waved my hand and stepped back into the locker-room. Three or four men in tweeds and golfing outfit were waiting there. In five



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minutes my prospective opponent entered. In five seconds the handcuffs were upon his wrists, and one of the three apparent golfers had the matter in hand.

"You are charged," he said, "with feloniously wounding William Harmell, manager, and John Stokes, clerk, of Brown's Bank in the Menwood Road, Leeds, and with stealing from the premises the sum of seven thousand pounds. I should recommend you to come with us quietly, and to reserve, for the present, anything you may have to say."

Looking at him as he stood leaning a little against his own locker, I could have sworn that there was no manner of change in the face or expression of my enemy. He ignored the others and looked across at me.

"This is your doing?" he asked.

"Altogether," I admitted.

"You knew it—last night?"

"It was you who reminded me that I need not take salt," I replied.

He nodded.

"The trick is to you," he confessed.

"I am ready, gentlemen."

He walked quietly out to a waiting motorcar, with a burly policeman on either side of him, and a very important man from Scotland Yard in the party. Rimmington and I were left behind, and presently we essayed a round of golf. All the time my eyes kept straying toward the Lodge. No sign, however, came from there.

"I still," Rimmington remarked, as we waited for a few minutes on the tenth tee, "don't quite understand how you tumbled to this affair so quickly."

"It was quite easy when you once admit the possibility of the occupants of the Dartier car being concerned," I replied. "Of course, Roberson was in it up to the eyes. It was Stanfield who drove up in Roberson's Ford and went direct to the bank. The Dartier car was already there, containing Janet Stanfield and Roberson, wearing a gray Homburg hat and a linen duster. The chauffeur brought into the store a small order which the grocer's assistant packed and took out. The chauffeur was taking advantage of the delay to fill up with petrol. The moment Stanfield descended from the Ford and made his way to the bank, Roberson slipped off his linen duster, produced a Panama hat which he pulled over his eyes, and made his purchases in the shop. He came out just as Stanfield reappeared, and drove the Ford away. Stanfield just stepped into the Dartier, put on his linen duster and gray Homburg hat, and off they started. The idea was to confuse, and at first it succeeded. The whole affair was ingenious, from the selection of that particular bank, which is wickedly isolated, to the exact location of the Dartier car, which made anyone on the off-side almost invisible."

"It's pretty generous of you to let me take the credit of this," Rimmington remarked.

"If Stanfield turns out to be Pugsley, and Pugsley the man I believe him to be," I said, "I shall need no other reward than the joy of having brought him to book."

"Do you believe him to be Michael Sayers?" Rimmington asked.

"I am absolutely certain of it," I answered.

We completed our round, lunched and played again. There came no sign from the Lodge. Somehow or other, the silence seemed to me ominous. Toward evening I began to get uneasy. Just as we were sitting down to dinner, I was fetched to the telephone.

"Inspector McCall speaking," the voice I heard declared. "Are you Sir Norman Greys?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Have you heard the news?"

"I have heard no particular news since early this morning," I replied.

"Stanfield escaped eleven miles from here," the Inspector declared gloomily.

"Escaped? Ridiculous!" I exclaimed.

"He did it, anyhow. He shot both his guards with an automatic pistol fixed in the sole of one shoe and worked with the toe of the other. Mr. Gorman, from Scotland Yard, is seriously wounded, and one of the others is shot in the leg. Stanfield then threatened the driver until he released him from the handcuffs and took him to within a mile of a railway station. There he tied the man up, drove the car on himself and disappeared. So far we have no news."

I COULD make no intelligible reply. I muttered something to the effect that Rimmington and I would come on to the police station the first thing in the morning. Then I walked outside, a little giddy, sick at heart, furious with myself and Fate. I stood looking toward the Lodge until at last I yielded to an irresistible impulse. I hastened across the few yards of heather-grown common, crossed the road, made my way up the straggling avenue and rang the great front-door bell. Presently the huge door swung silently open. Janet stood there, looking out at me.

I freely admit that I lost my nerve. I lost my poise, and with it all the gifts which enable a man to face an exceptional situation. For this woman showed no signs of any mental disturbance. I had never seen her look more beautiful. She moved away from the door.

"Come in," she invited. "I have been expecting you."

Our footsteps awakened strange echoes in the hall. She led the way into the sitting-room which opened onto the terrace, and sank back on the divan, where apparently she had been resting.

"Judas!" she murmured.

"You know, then?" I demanded harshly.

"Everything—even the last little episode. What fools you policemen are!"

"He isn't safe yet," I muttered.

She laughed mockingly.

"I worry no more about him," she declared. "It is not an equal struggle. I worry only about myself, alone here."

"Alone—here!" I echoed.

She nodded.

"Harding, our butler-chauffeur and confederate, has taken the car—where, you can guess. Our gillie broke his leg this morning and has gone to hospital. I am not afraid of burglars, but I am terrified of mice, and the place is overrun with them. Also I simply loathe the idea



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of having to get up and make my own coffee in the morning."

I rose to my feet. "There are empty rooms at the Dormy House," I told her, "where you could obtain service and be made quite comfortable. I am going back now. Shall I bespeak one for you?"

"You would really have me there," she asked curiously, "under the same roof as your august and respectable self?"

"Why not?" "The wife of a famous criminal," she reminded me, "the wife of the man whom you have betrayed! You and I share a secret too, don't we? Would you vouch for my—respectability?"

I MOVED a step toward her. Her eyes were filled with a mingled light, a light of allurements and cruelty. Her lips were moist and quivering—was it with anger? A long bare arm was withdrawn from behind her head. . . . Then a voice fell upon the throbbing silence like a douche of cold water.

"Hands up—like lightning!" I obeyed. I recognized the voice of the man in Harding's livery. It was Stanfield, who had crept in upon us unheard.

"A mixture of Lothario and Inspector Bucket!" he mocked. "Any prayers to say?"

"If you are going to shoot, let's have it over quickly," I answered.

The woman stepped between us. "Don't be absurd," she said to the newcomer. "We couldn't afford to part with Sir Norman. Life would be too dull without him. Put him on parole. He is perfectly trustworthy."

"You are right," Stanfield admitted. "Take your choice, Greyes—twelve hours' silence, or Eternity."

"I will be silent for twelve hours," I promised.

He pointed to the door. "I cannot have the last few hours I may ever spend with my wife disturbed," he said. "Kindly leave us."

I went. There was a mist before my eyes, a cloud befogging my brain.

Rimmington was sitting on the porch, smoking, when I got back. He moved his head toward the Lodge. It was obvious from his dejection that he too had heard from McCall.

"What do you think about taking a look round there?" he suggested.

"Quite useless," I replied tersely. "Let's have a game of billiards and try and forget the whole damned business."

A new exploit of Sir Norman in pursuit of the arch criminal Michael Sayers will be described in the forthcoming March issue.

H A T E

(Continued from page 79)

clanking draft-stock that would haul them to the train, and the black-browed Jules Lascaigne, taking his turn at nursing the bandaged puma, while Ed Marshall, out at the treasury wagon, checked up the day's receipts. The side-wall rose. A cursing "skinner" guided his heavy horses beneath it and attached them to a den. Then another wagon started on its journey toward the runs and its position on the flat-cars. Hurrying from other duties, two menagerie attendants approached the cage of Midnight and stared through the bars.

"Want these here side-boards on yet?" they queried.

"Yes. Might as well." Lascaigne nodded. "But tell the skimmers not to take this cage until Mr. Marshall gives the word."

"Aye-aye!"

The carved wooden coverings of the cage were slid into place, shutting the den in darkness, with the exception of a glint of light from the grill-work door at the end. In his section of the cage Midnight, quieted temporarily by the dimness, moved slowly away from the partition and slumped in the straw of the farther end, not to stir again until the rocking motion of the train should arouse him once more to restlessness and his night-long efforts to break through to the thing he hated. The attendants went on—and Jules Lascaigne moved swiftly toward the barrier.

No one could see. A screwdriver came from his pocket. One after another the long braces which held the groove-runners in place were loosened, until they

barely hung in their sockets, weakening the barrier until the first lunge of the big stocky cat beyond would send it sagging—and the second or third throw it flat upon the surface of the cage, a barricade no longer. And when that came, the end doors would be in place and covered with canvas, the world beyond would be a shrieking thing of wind and steel and grinding wheels, with no human aid nearer than the watchman, walking the tops of the elephant cars, a hundred yards away!

"Lascaigne!"

"Yes, Mr. Marshall." The screwdriver was tucked hurriedly into a hip pocket.

"How's everything?"

"Fine, sir. The cat's asleep, and seems to be breathing all right."

"Good! Might as well go ahead and turn in. Wont be able to get over there for a few minutes—but I guess that puma can get along by itself that long."

"Yes sir." Issuing from the cage, the black-browed man hurried through the menagerie tent and to his bunk in the cars, anxious that others of the circus might see him, and note that he went to bed when they did, that there was nothing unnatural about his actions. . . .

HOURS later, when the train had begun to lurch and rock with its full impetus, Black Midnight awoke. All about was a world of noise, the whistling of the wind in the canvas covering of his cage, the clicking of the wheels upon the rail-joints, the grinding and clanking of the couplings, the chug of the wagons against the blocks which held them taut upon

the flat-cars. Slowly the cat writhed to his feet and stretched. Then suddenly he sniffed—and yowled, with a screeching, maddened note, even as he had yowled that afternoon when Jules Lascaigne had passed with the bleeding puma in his arms.

The great heavy paws padded restlessly. The long, poisonous claws extended. Then a crouch, a gathering of utmost strength into every muscle—and the spring! A rattling, hollow clatter was the answer as the loose partition banged and settled from the impact. Again! Once more! For a fourth time—and then Black Midnight, yellow-eyed, fiendish, hateful Black Midnight went through!

DAWN—and the clanking of steel as the razorbacks, or train-men, fastened the runways in place for the process of unloading. From the horse-cars came the rattle of tug-chains as the draft-stock was harnessed and made ready for the long hauls to the circus lot. At the runs, the yellow, flickering torches glared until such time as the rising sun should relieve them of duty. The watchman walked along the flats on his last trip of inspection. Suspiciously he raised his lantern beside a cage—and, with a quick pull of his breath between his teeth, hurried for the sleeping-cars. A moment later Jules Lascaigne drowsily responded to a tugging at his shoulder.

"You've got Cage Sixty-one, aint you, Mr. Lascaigne?"

The trainer looked past the yellow gleam, into the face of the watchman.

"Yes. Why?"

"Something's gone wrong in there. There's blood dripping out under the side-boards—"

"Wait till I dress!" The black-browed man had leaped from his bunk. Five minutes later he stood with the watchman beside a silent den and watched the slow trickle of black-red drops to the flat-car floor. Then suddenly he raised on tiptoe and pounded with tight-clinched fists against the side-boards.

"Marshall!" he called. "Mr. Marshall! Mr. Marshall!" There was no answer. Lascaigne turned to his companion in simulated fright. "He doesn't answer! Marshall was in there—something's happened."

The watchman moved closer and tremblingly passed forward his flickering lantern, dying the dim death of an oil-less wick.

"Hadh't you better look in?"

"I guess so. Shake up that lantern."

"It's about gone. Out of oil."

"Wont help us much, then. But I'll take it."

"Want me to help boost you up to the ventilator?"

"No. Couldn't see anything that way." Jules Lascaigne was forcing himself to be calm in his moment of victory. "I'll have to go through the door."

"Well, pull it shut behind you." The watchman laughed nervously. "Whatever's in there might break out—"

"Don't worry. Hold up this canvas until I unlock this cross-bar. That's it. Now stand aside."

He opened the door and pushed the lantern before him. Far in a corner two



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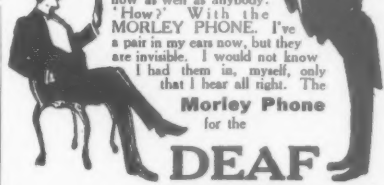
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gleaming eyes reflected the spluttering rays, but Jules Lascaigne did not notice. His gaze was on something else, something which caused his heart to bound, and a strange, thrilling exultation to surge through him with the headiness of strong wine: the gaping space where once had been a partition. From without came a second appeal of the watchman to fasten the door, and Lascaigne obeyed abstractedly. Once more he raised the lantern.

"Midnight," he called. "Midnight!"

The gleaming eyes seemed to sway. Again came the command:

"Midnight—Midnight! Come here, old fellow. Good old Midnight—" Then he shrieked. The lantern crashed to the floor and flickered into darkness, from the heart of which came the scream of a man in terror: "No! Get back there—my God—get back—get back!"

Outside, a white-faced watchman veered from the flat-car, and leaping to the cinder-strewn right of way, ran wildly forward, shouting as he ran. Far up

the line of cars he swerved toward a figure just leaving the coaches, and clawed at him with tense, hooked hands.

"Something's happened, Mr. Williams. Down in the Sixty-one cage. Lascaigne went in there, and—"

"Went in?" The lot-superintendent grasped him by the shoulders. "Come on! You've got your gun, ain't you? Maybe we've got a chance. Which side did he open?"

"I—I—don't know. I just heard him scream, and—"

"Then there's trouble. They had a puma in one end, you know. Got scratched up yesterday afternoon and Mr. Marshall stayed with it last night. Wanted more room than half a den allowed, so they transferred that tiger over there and put the puma in where Sahib had been. I guess—"

They were at the cage. It was silent again—but at one end a thin stream of new red was beginning to edge its way along the side-boards.

FLOWERS OF FANCY

(Continued from page 70)

if it does put this little old troupe of mine on the toboggan, it's all right, which bet goes double. We aint been much of a success on the road," concluded the manager, "but if we landed a winner in the matrimonial stakes, why, I aint goin' to claim no fouts."

"Yep," supplemented the Humming Bird, "everythin' is all right, exceptin' the goat, which is me. But anyway, so long as Dottie is fixed, it aint up to anybody to start nothin' that makes a noise like calamity."

"I don't want you gentlemen to think I came here out of idle curiosity," resumed Prosper quietly. "You see, I used to be a troupier myself, and I know just how things are going with you. Dot told me a good deal, and I'm here to see if this enterprise can't be framed up on a more profitable basis. You can't hand people what they don't want, nowadays. My advice is to make a fresh start, get together a troupe that has some real claims to quality, and book yourselves over a better circuit."

From his pocket he drew forth a well-filled wallet and passed the contents over to the amazed manager. "I think you'll find enough there to put out a pretty fair kind of an attraction, and I want you to accept it as an evidence of good will, both from Dot and myself."

Moriarty stared in a dazed way at the speaker. He rubbed his eyes as one waking from a trance, but try as he would, he could not find words to express sentiment adequate to the occasion.

"I never was what you might call a conversationalist," he stammered. "And if I knew how to thank you, I'd do it. Sometimes it's better to leave folks thinkin' about what you didn't say. Aint that Dot out there, sittin' in that big tourin'-car? Come on, boys, let's all gwan out and see her." Moriarty made a sudden and suspicious break for the door. He was evidently laboring under

a phase of feeling which no language could express.

Congratulations were heaped thick upon the blushing bride. Moriarty was the last to extend his, and as the others withdrew a little apart, he ventured to express certain thoughts which seemed to occur to him regarding the holy state of matrimony, and which the particular occasion demanded.

"I needn't tell you how to play the hand," he cautioned gravely. "You always was class—only this marriage business aint no hurry-up event. It's four-mile heats, under old-fashioned rules."

THE face of the girl was buried in her handkerchief. She murmured an inaudible reply.

"Some folks which gets married, Dot," he continued, "makes the mistake of thinkin' that all the money is hangin' on the quarter-pole, an' they blow up before they get to the wire. I aint much of an adviser, but if you was to ask me, I'd say, start out easy and wait till you hit the head of the stretch; then like as not you'll finish in the first three. An' if anythin' should go wrong," concluded the manager, "but of course it aint, but if so be it should go wrong, why, all you've gotta do is to wire for transportation an' join out all over again."

"I wanted to see you-all and thank you before we went away," said the girl in a broken voice. "You were always so kind and considerate to me."

"Forgit it, Dottie, forgit it," replied the girl's late manager. Good-by! And if you ever think of us show-folks, try an' remember all that was best of us, and throw out everythin' that looks like a bad race."

Moriarty thrust his hands deep into capacious pockets, to find therein the comforting impact of the newly acquired bank-roll. He stared after the retreating car, looked up and down the

busy thoroughfare and cleared his throat several times before he spoke.

"I have won on many a disqualification," he attested slowly, addressing no one in particular. "An' I've been in Dutch more times than I could count, but the way this play come up, why, I—" Moriarty paused irresolutely as he cast about for a fitting simile. "I—I lined it out for muddy goin' with all the worst of the weights, an' here the track is like pasteboard made to order, and rolled like a bowlin' alley. Does anybody know the answer?"

OVER the Humming Bird's face stole an expression of admirably simulated surprise. He threw back his shoulders, flecked an imaginary particle of dust from his coat-sleeve and smiled indulgently.

"You always was a bum guesser when you didn't have no ace to go with, Barney," he exclaimed with an air of patronizing superiority. "An' so you don't know the answer? Say, Barney, you couldn't see a Christmas tree in a hall bedroom."

"I couldn't?" grumbled the manager of the Musical Maidens with some warmth. "You figger I let 'em all get by, eh? Well—well! Tell me somethin'."

"Very good, Barney, very good!" continued the press-agent with somber self-abnegation. "Look at Dot rollin' away lookin' like a regular royal queen. Look at yourself, nursin' a bank-roll as big as a bale of hay. Look at the merry, merry sunshine, an' listen to the band playin' 'Conquerin' Hero.' And then—look at me!"

The speaker with dramatic intonation and a gesture of almost tragedy clipped his words off short at the exclamation point. He wheeled about and faced the owner of the Musical Maidens.

"That's what I said," he intoned solemnly. "That's what I said—look at me!" Me—the originator, the inventor, patentee an' sole proprietor of the Alabaster Carnation. Look me in the eye, Barney Moriarty, old pal, an' tell me oncet if you aint got to hand it to the Hummin' Bird?"

SOULS FOR SALE

(Continued from page 51)

poverty. That is even less—ah, marketable. There's a big line of scared and hungry people always forming and falling away out there—some of them are old veterans with children, artists who have done fine things for us. But we have to turn them away. If an old lady with sixteen starving babies asked me to let her play a young girl's part, I couldn't give it to her—could I, now?"

"No, but I'm not an old lady with sixteen children," Remember persisted, stupidly stubborn.

"No, but you don't suit the director, and he's got the final say. Mr. Rookes gave you a test. He saw the result, and says you haven't got comedy—at least not in that part. Comedy is difficult—it takes twice as much skill and experience as romantic drama. You may have it, but you didn't show it."

Remember struggled to her feet and turned to the door. But the sight of that plunk, that coffin-lid, made her recoil. She could not go out into the wilderness. She could not go home to her mother and confess failure, accept despair. Her lips wavered childishly. She found things in her throat to swallow. Her eyelashes were full of rain. Her diaphragm began to throb.

Remember cried beautifully, honestly. She was not artful about it, or insincere. It was a gift. She suffered with exquisite ease and grace.

Tirrey found himself more dangerously wooed by her grief than by her proffer of love. Her shoulders were pitifully round; her hands groped for other hands to help; her eyes, seen blurred and monstrous with weeping tears, were more beautiful somehow than when she had tried to fill them with seduction.

Tirrey paced the floor, promising Remember all sorts of wonderful futures. He managed hardly to keep his hands from her by intrusting them to each other

to hold clenched behind his back. But his sympathy only fed Remember's self-sympathy with new fuel.

AT the screen door that opened on his office appeared Mr. Rookes, the director who had rejected Remember after the test. He did not know who was crying, but his emotional soul heard the call, and he peered in through spectacles already misted.

Remember saw him and ran to him, imploring: "Please, oh please, Mr. Rookes, give me a chance!"

Mr. Rookes had a priestly regard for his altars. A work of art was as solemn and as chaste a burnt offering to his god the Public, as the oblation of any other priest before any other deity. Rookes knew, as well as Shakespeare knew, that pathos and the tragedy suffered if there were no attendant buffoonery, no relief of tension, no tightening and releasing of the springs of laughter. If an actor could not command laughter he must not be intrusted with comic rôles, however serious his necessities. Rookes would have let his mother or his daughter die rather than give her a part she could not play.

Remember's sobs so agitated Rookes, however, that he finally said: "You come and see the test yourself, and then if you think you ought to have the part—well—you come and see for yourself."

He opened the door for her and led her out into the lot. He called to a man smoking on a short flight of steps:

"Heinie, have you that reel of Miss Steddon's test I took the other day?"

"I guess so."

"Put it on, will you."

"Sure! Go in Number Two."

Rookes escorted her into a small cell dimly lighted, a screen at one end, at the other a few seats against a wall perforated for the projection machines.

The operator in his room at the back

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snapped off the one lamp and then proceeded to play a long stream of light upon the screen. The long shaft like a magic brush stippled a swift succession of portraits on the opposite wall. Every portrait was a record of some mood of Remember.

It was weird to see herself over there flat and colorless yet fantastically alive. She was face to face with herself for the first time. Science had answered Robert Burns': "Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us."

Remember had studied her mirror and still photographs of herself, but now she met a stranger who surprised her infinitely. She had never realized her features as they were, nor her expressions. She could look at her own profile. She could see herself with her eyes shut. She could coldly regard herself in laughter and in an effort at flirtation. The miracle of miracles was that her very thought was photographed. She could see her brain pulling at her muscles, as one who stands behind the scenes at a puppet show sees the man aloft and the wires that depend from his fingers jerking at the jointed dolls.

SHE had to admit that her smile was artificial; her lips drew back heavily and mirthlessly from her teeth. Her lips were prettier than she had supposed, and her teeth more regular, but her smile was a struggle. Her arch expression was clumsy. Her glance askance was labored, and when she executed the mischievous wink, her eyelid went down and up as delicately as a cellar door.

She shook her head and wasted a blush of shame on the dark. She could not blame Mr. Rookes for rejecting her. She told him so, and he was grateful for that. "I've learned a lot," she said. "I wish I could have another try."

"I wish you could, but the part is filled for this picture. Another time I'll remember, but it's too late for this picture."

He heard her catch her breath in a quick stab, and he was afraid that her prayers would be renewed. He hastened to say:

"Let me show you the girl who got the part. Let's see what you think of her." He called out, "Oh, Heinie, put on that test of Miss Dainty."

"Sure!" came the hail from the man at the wheel.

And then the white beam shot forth a serial portrait of a successful rival. This girl was pretty where Remember was beautiful. She was superficial and frivolous where Remember was deep and important. But she had the *vis comica*. She was as sparkling as a shallow brook. Her eyes danced, mocked, flitted. Her lips twitched with contagious mockery. "I see why you took her," Remember sighed. "I don't wonder."

"It's fine of you to say that," said Rookes, and squeezed her hand in grateful compliment. The kindness of this set the girl's regrets off again.

She went out into the sunlight, convinced and beaten. But being convinced of one's unworthiness and confessing one's defeat are not consolations—only added sorrows. Before Rookes could escape, she was crying again. She loathed herself

for her weakness, her poltroonery before a disappointment. She called herself names, but sobbed the harder for her self-contempt.

IT chanced that the president of the company was returning to his office from a visit to one of the stages. Like most business geniuses Mr. Bermond was far more emotional, sensitive, responsive, audacious, than the bulk of his artists or his critics. He could not pour out his emotions in song, verse, impersonation or gesture; he must pour it out in capital. He must dig the capital with grim toil, and he must scatter it like a spendthrift heir.

When Mr. Bermond heard Remember crying, his heart hurt him. He did not like scandal, disorder, confusion or grief on his lot.

He asked the distraught Rookes what had happened. Rookes explained: "A bit of temperament—she wants a part she can't play, and she's all cut up."

"Oh, that is too bad!" Bermond groaned, and his voice took on a mothering tone. He went to Remember and tried to console her. He took her hands down from her comforted face, and forced her to look at him. Seen through the cascade of her tears, she was strikingly attractive, appealing.

He tested the public always by his own reactions. He judged artists by their influence on him. He felt that Remember was somehow an artistic weeper. His brain was alert to make use of ability wherever he found it.

"Don't you take it too hard," he said. "You never know your luck in this world. Many an artist gets thrown out of one job into a much better one. I knew a young singer and dancer who was fired because he was not good enough to come into New York with a cheap show. Two days later he was engaged for the biggest part in the most beautiful musical piece in years, and ever since he has been a star."

"If the first manager had not fired him, the second would never have given him his chance. If you had played that little village vamp, you would maybe have played it so badly we should never have engaged you again. But now—you go home and wash the red out of your eyes, and any day now, we'll be sending for you to play a big part. Sarah Bernhardt failed in her first rôle, you know, and you may be a second Sarah some day. Just you wait. Now, that's all right."

Remember's eyes were filling with rainbows. Bermond's companion drew him aside. Claymore was a dramatist who had had a few successes before he established himself in the moving pictures as a director. He believed in the eternal verities of dramatic expression and motive, and he was skeptic of the rituals of the parvenu priesthood of the movies.

"That girl has the tear," he said to Bermond. "That woman you've given me for my next picture is awful. I've spent two days trying to make her cry. She has the face of a doll, and she's as tender as a billiard ball. She's a confirmed optimist. She couldn't even shake her shoulderblades as if she were crying. Let me take this kid and give her a real test. She might have just what we want."

"Sure! Fine! Go to it!" said Bermond, and hastened to Remember with the good news that Mr. Claymore—the great Mr. Claymore—was going to give her a chance.

So Remember left the studio shod with the ankle-wings of hope, those tireless pinions that carry the actor lightly along such dreary miles of barren road. As she hurried through the gate, one of the studio-cars drew out and the driver paused to offer her a lift. He was taking home Miss Calder, an actress of much fame as an impersonator of women of various ages. In the picture she was then engaged in, she carried the character from young motherhood to ancient grandmotherhood.

She was tired as a pack-horse, and small wonder. She explained to Remember that she had been called at six in the morning in order to be breakfasted, and made up for a nine o'clock appearance on the stage. The dressing of her hair, and the filling of it with white metallic powder that would photograph as really gray, was a long and wearisome process. The preparation of her features was another. She had given herself to racking emotions and much physical toil since nine. It was now six, and she had not yet had time to remove her make-up.

But Remember's ardor for a screen-career was not to be blunted by any account of overwork. Artistic toil was what she craved, and when the car stopped at her bungalow, she ran to her mother rejoicing as if she brought home certain wealth instead of a gambling chance for grueling labor.

She paused at the door, suddenly remembering that her mother was not a woman of theatrical traditions but the devoted wife of a preacher who abominated the moving pictures all the better for never having seen one, and whose horror of every fiend connected with them was the more unrestrained for never having met one of the fiends.

CHAPTER XXXI

REMEMBER entered the house with a remorseful dread that she would find her mother in the dismay of a stolen child flung in the corner of a wagon filled with gypsies. She found her presiding over the house with a meek autocracy.

She might not have been so daring if her daughter had been there to quell her presumptions. She had stayed in her room until she heard the racket and caught the savor of dinner-getting. Then she had slipped into the kitchen where Leva and two other girls were bustling about, stared at them a moment, and announced that she was going to do the cooking and the housework herself. They had tried to shoo her back to her room, but she amazed them by her gentle obstinacy and her irresistible will.

"You children need a mother more'n most anything else," she had said, "and I'm going to be one to you. I can't be an artist, but I can raise a family."

By the time Remember arrived, the girls were calling her "Mother." Sundry young men who drifted in that evening were soon calling her Mother. In a

week they were kissing her when they came in and kissing her when they left, bringing to her the troubles that no one ever gets too old to want a mother's eye upon. Before the week was gone Mrs. Steddon was going to parties, to dances, to beach picnics.

And so the old village parson's wife abruptly found herself or made herself a theatrical mamma. This sort of mother has been often presented, but rarely without caricature, almost never with understanding. Because she is apt to grow a little stagey, and to forget her years and the solemnity expected of them; because her daughter is pretty sure to be unmanageable, she is dealt with more harshly than the more familiar mother who persuades her daughter to become a housewife and to marry a substantial husband instead of a romantic lover, than the mother who keeps her daughter from suing a cruel husband for divorce, than the mother who fears the gossip of the neighbors more than the smothered infamies of a hypocritical home, than the mother who endures every drudgery, skulduggery and shame, and destroys her own birthright to deceive her children.

Her own daughter was the first to feel uneasy. Remember had expected her mother to be horrified by the new surroundings. She had braced herself to defend the art-life against prejudice. She was disappointed of the support that criticism gives. Besides, children like to break rules and to disobey and shock their elders. These are among the chief fascinations and consolations of having to endure youth.

But Mrs. Steddon's emancipation was for Remember to discover with amazement gradually. For the moment she was too much absorbed in her mad hopes to consider her mother's belated debut into the full light of day. The next morning found her at the studio betimes, borrowing mascara and advice from Miss Calder, who had experimented with her skin as in a laboratory and who delivered a scientific discourse on the epidermis and its preparation for the camera.

Claymore was waiting for her when she came down the steps from the long gallery of the women's dressing-rooms. She was daubed, smeared, lined, powdered, rouged, mascaroed and generally kalsomined for duty. Her heart was beating in alternate throbs of fear and frenzy. Her feet were at the brink of the Rubicon.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE scene of her endeavor was to be a drawing-room built and decorated for an unfinished picture. The company was now in the Mojave Desert practicing art on the edge of Death Valley.

Claymore had provided a camera-man, a few men to handle the electric lights, a property man and even a pair of musicians, a violinist and a man with a wheezy little portable melodeon. Where the ceiling of the drawing-room should have been was a platform on which a number of downward-pointing spotlights were arrayed in the charge of a man called Mike. From the scaffoldings above hung great dome-lights called ash-cans. In



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the windows and doors other spotlights were ambushed, each group with its attendant, and where the fourth wall was removed, great iron frames held rows of Cooper-Hewitt tubes like harp-strings, and sun-arcs, Kliegl lights and other instruments of torture connected by cables to various switchboards.

The concentrated radiance burned out the eyes in time, or brought on painful temporary blindness called "Kliegl eyes." To the newcomer there was an insanity about the extravagance of glare. But the finished result reduced the flame to a twilight and explained the necessity; each picture could be exposed for only the sixteenth of a second, and in its tiny frame of less than a square inch, it must compress enough definition to cover a screen hundreds of times its size.

When Remember walked on the great stage and followed Claymore into the little space allotted to her, she noted the waiting crew of spectators, and her heart faltered. How could she give her soul to emotions in the presence of these strangers? It would be like stripping herself and dancing stark before a band of peeping Toms. But needs must, when the devil of ambition drives.

Claymore marched her into the scene and asked her to stand while the camera man made his set-up for a long shot. The electricians trundled their batteries forward and turned them on her; the cameraman advanced upon her with the tape measure and went back to squint at her through the finder. He stared at her through a glass of deep blue and discussed her hair and her eyes with Claymore, who came forward carrying a rouge-stick he borrowed from somebody's forgotten make-up box, and gave Remember's mouth a little extra length, put a dot next the inner corner of each eye, and taking a powder puff dusted her brow lightly, where the perspiration of terror was beginning to shine.

Then he gave her a little of what he called foot-work.

"Go back to that door, and come forward to this spot, shake hands with—er—with your lover—er—well—no, let me see. That's too simple; let's get down to business.

"You've a—oh—well, just for instance, you've been—er—betrayed and your child has died and you've been accused of murdering it and you're now being called before the judge and the jury. Do you get me? You're coming into a courtroom under a charge of crime; you feel your shame, but you're innocent of the charge; yet you're overwhelmed with guilt for your fall, and the father of the child is—was killed in the war, say—and you don't much care whether you live or die; so you're in despair, yet defiant. That's a triple layer of emotion for you, and I don't suppose you can get much of it over, but—just try to get the atmosphere of it. Now, back to the door. Walk through it once."

Claymore was as much embarrassed as Remember, for his invention was not in its best working order so early in the morning. He felt as silly as a man badgered by a peevish child to tell a story.

But his trite complex stirred Remember amazingly. He could not know how close his random shots had come home

to her and flung her back from the forward-looking artist to the lorn fugitive who had stumbled into California laden with disgrace.

She was all atremble, and her eyes darted, her fingers twitched. Claymore marveled at her instantaneous response to his suggestion. There were native artists who shivered on the least breath of inspiration and suggestion. His first impression of Remember was that he had found a genius, and he fought against the obstacles he encountered later, with the zest of a man digging toward known gold.

REMEMBER in a kind of stupor now obeyed his commands like the trained confederate of a hypnotist. She went to the door, came in reluctant, shamefast, doomed. She advanced slowly till she reached the edge of the rug he had indicated, then halted, and with a fierce effort hoisted her head in defiance and braved the lightning of the judge.

She heard Claymore call to her: "That's fine! Now we'll take it!"

She started back but was checked by the camera-man's, "Wait please!" He ran forward and shouted directions on all sides for lights.

"Hit those spots! Throw the ash-can on her. Bring up that Kliegl. Put a diffuser on that Winfield. What's the matter with the second spot? Your carbons are flickering. Mike! trim those carbons on the second spot! Pull 'em!"

Then the lights went out, and there was a wait while Mike ran along the gallery platform with tweezers in his gloved hands. When Mike was ready, the camera-man shouted: "Hit 'em! All right, Mr. Claymore!" Mr. Claymore called: "Music, please!"

And Remember found herself in a sea of blazing radiance tremulous with a shimmer of music, a low-breathing organ and a violin that cried like a lost child.

She went back to the door and nodded when Claymore's, "Are you ready?" penetrated the myth-realm from far away. She heard him murmur, "Camera! Action!" and she heard his voice reciting an improvised libretto for her pantomime.

"You've come from your dark cell! The light blinds you! You begin to see the angry public, the cruel judge. You flinch. You fall back. They are going to sentence me to death! They are hissing me—because I loved too well! 'But my little baby—they said I killed him! They can't know how I loved him, how I felt his little hands on my cheek, his lips at my breast! How I suffered when his cheek grew cold! O God, I prayed for his life, even though it meant eternal shame! But he is gone! My lover is dead! What is this world to me?' Wring your hands! Look up at the judge! Draw yourself up! Defy him! That's it! Now let the tears come! 'My baby, I am coming to you!'"

She felt a fool, a guilty fool. The music, the lights, the director's voice—all, all was insanity. But it swept her heart-strings with an Æolian thrill, and they sang with a mad despair.

She vaguely knew that the camera crank had ceased to purr; she heard the *clap* of the levers shutting off the lights; the music was ended. But her suffering went on. She could not stop crying.

Her head bent; her taut body broke at the waist; she was sobbing into a corner of her elbow and dropping to the floor, when Claymore caught her and upheld her, eased her to a chair, and stood patting her back idiotically and saying: "Fine—fine!"

She looked up to see if he were mocking her, and saw that his cheeks were streaked with tears. The camera-man was doleful as if he mourned, and the property man was turning away to blow his nose.

Remember began to laugh, the laugh of triumph. She was still acting, for she felt that she had cheated a little. The director had stabbed an old wound by accident and unsealed an old fountain of tears. He had exhausted her dramatic experience of life already, and he would find her imagination unschooled, her mental and physical agility all to seek.

But he had touched her once. She had responded once to the call and had given the strange authority of reality to a feigned adventure of her soul.

"She's got it in her!" he mumbled to the camera-man. And the camera-man with eyes still murky grumbled:

"The real thing!"

Now Claymore cast about for the next test.

"You've got the gift of tears," he said. "Now let's try a bit of drama! Let's exaggerate and chew up the scenery and tear a passion to tatters, for it's easy to tone you down when you overdo, but it's hard to pep you up if you're flat."

He cudgelled his brain for an excuse for ranting, towering rage. He chose one of those scenes innumerable done in the moving pictures, a sordid pattern common enough in real life through the ages, but all too crowded in the movies, infinitely multiplied and repeated until it became boresome to the frequenters of the films, and nauseated the moralists, gave them excuse for a general assault on the whole art and industry.

Claymore took up a heap of tarpaulin and piled it on a chair to represent a man, found a screw-driver left on the scene by a carpenter and gave it to Remember for a pistol. Then he outlined a scenario startling and bewildering to her, and utterly uncongenial to her character and experience:

"This tarpaulin is a terrible villain. He has decoyed you from your home, and tired of you: he has put you on the street and made a drug-fiend of you, and now you have seen him with another girl; and you plead with him not to desert you; he laughs at you; you turn on him like a tigress, and when he goes on laughing, you creep up on him with a false smile and suddenly shoot him with this pistol."

Remember stared at him like a dumb thing that had not understood a word. She looked at the screw-driver. It had no resemblance to a pistol, and if it had suggested one, she would have dropped it in horror. She stared at the pile of yellow canvas and could get nothing human out of or into that.

"I don't believe I quite understand," she faltered, suddenly reverted to primer days when she was asked to read a page she had neglected to study.

Claymore missed the instant response of his first appeal—to her imagination, as he thought; to her memory, as she knew. Her eyes were a fogged mirror now, and gave back neither light nor image.

He played the part for her. None of the spectators thought it funny or silly. It was part of the familiar routine, factory commonplace, to see a fat bald-headed director striding about, clutching his heart and sobbing.

Remember had hidden in her father's study once and watched him rehearse a sermon, had seen him beat his desk for a pulpit, raise his streaming eyes to the ceiling for heaven, and repeat phrases in various intonations in search of the most effective stop.

She was not amused or disgusted by Claymore's antics. She was simply baffled. Unable to feel why he did what he did, she tried to remember his actions.

When he finished, she took the screw-driver and repeated his gestures with neither accuracy nor spirit. She merely gave a girl's poor imitation of a man's poor imitation of a poor girl's frenzy.

She shook her head in confessed failure, before Claymore shook his head and scratched it and said patiently:

"That's hardly it. You didn't quite get the spirit. You see, you're a"—and so forth, *da capo al fine*.

The camera-man sat down. The rest of the crew turned aside to gossip about more interesting topics. They knew that they were in for a long wait.

CHAPTER XXXIII

CLAYMORE wrestled with Remember's flaccid soul. He walked her through the scene again and again. He sat on the chair and pretended to be the villain. He laughed with very hollow mockery. He played the part himself. He said:

"If you'll give it more voice, you'll give it more spirit. Call me a beast with all your power!"

Remember faltered, "You're a beast!" so feebly that Claymore laughed and she had to join him. He said to her: "Look me in the eye and with all the venom and volume you've got, snarl: 'Agh, you beast!'"

He roared it so full-chestedly at Remember that she quailed before him. Then she nodded, understanding, and gave back the words. It was like an oboe trying to echo a trombone. She shook her head in discouragement. He would not give her up.

"Fill your lungs and hurl your whole body into it!"

She tried again and again, but her voice was stringy, stunted, reedish. He spoke bluntly in good old English:

"You've got to get your guts into it!"

She did not know that she had any, and he had to explain that he really meant her diaphragm.

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are you most afraid of?" he said. "I don't know," she giggled sillily.

"What's your favorite nightmare?" She pondered, "Well, I—I—"

"Falling off a cliff is one of the most popular," said Claymore.

"I fell off a cliff once," said Remember almost boastfully.

"Really! And did you survive?" Claymore gasped, then grinned at his own imbecility. "I know one actress who dreams that she is caught under a wrecked automobile and can't get out and is being crushed to death."

To Claymore's amazement the blank mien before him was suddenly shot through with anguish, the features knotted and whitened with streaks of red like a clenched hand. Once more he had thrust his hand into one of her experiences. She felt the presence of Elwood Farnaby, her almost forgotten first love, and last. The ghastliness of his death under a runaway automobile flashed back before her. She felt in her soul a regurgitation of all the terrors that had churned in her heart in those hideous days and nights.

Claymore, never dreaming what the random hint had evoked in her soul, felt happy at finding her responsive once more. He called to the camera-man:

"Come on, Johnny, we'll take a close-up, a big close-up! Be as quick as you can."

While Remember hung back, saying, "Please! No, no! I couldn't! Don't make me!" Claymore was hurrying the crew to seize this precious excitement before it died.

He was like an Audubon who had shot down a wild bird and ran forward to transfer to canvas the bright colors of the plumage before death could dull their luster.

The crew closed in upon the camera with a mass of blazing lights. Claymore pushed a chair close up to the lens. The camera-man spread and shortened his tripod and got on his knees. He made one of the crew sit in the chair while he sharpened the focus and perfected the lights. He did not want to fatigue the priceless heights of agitation that he could see in Remember's wide eyes as she stood wavering before the sudden gust of emotion.

Protesting and reluctant, yet too palsied for flight, Remember permitted Claymore to lead her to the chair and place her in a cowering position.

"Close your eyes, to save them from the light!" he said. "Don't open them till I tell you to. Then open them suddenly and see the automobile upon you. It's on fire. You can't move. You struggle in vain. I'll hold on to your hands to pinion you down. When you see that you are crushed and caught, give me the wildest cry you can scream! All ready, Johnny? Hit the lights! Take the camera from my nod. Now, my dear, you're in the car; the brake is broken; it's dashing over a cliff; it's turned over; you are under it; it's on fire. When I say the word, open your eyes and face death and die with one terrible shriek."

She felt through her clenched eyelids and on her shivering cheeks the flare and heat of the focused calciums. She felt his hands dragging her helpless wrists down till she was all huddled upon her-

self. She seemed to feel in his taut and frenzied grip the weight of the engine that had slain her lover. Then she heard the quick word "Now!" She opened her eyes and saw a chaos of wrecked iron and steel closing her in in a blinding glare. Terror knifed her, and her whole body was wrung with a mad howl of affright.

She heard her voice go leaping into the high spaces. Her hands were free. They went to her left side, where her heart rocked like a fire-bell. She opened her eyes in wonder. The lights were off. The crew was staring at her with white faces. The camera-man was breathing fast. Claymore was mopping his blanched brow and saying "Whew!"

It was so inadequate a word for the awe still shaking their little world, that everybody began to laugh.

Claymore brought forth his most valued word saved for rare occasions.

"By God, that was authentic!" And the others said, "The real thing!"—a strange phrase for a perfection of imitation.

CLAYMORE was encouraged again. He had found another nugget in the rubble. He would continue to work the mine.

Another failure trailed at heel of this other victory. Claymore returned to his little drama of the street. He tried to get energy in a gesture, in a walk, a stride, a quick whirl, a flaunt of arms, a fierce charge.

But Remember had been schooled all her life to keep her hands down and to avoid flourish, to take short steps and to keep her waist and hips stolid. Though the fashions of the day gave her short loose skirts, no corsets and free arms, she might as well have been handcuffed and hobbled and fastened in iron stays, for all the freedom she used.

Claymore made her run, with longer and longer stride, bend and touch the floor, fling her arms aloft, take the steps of a Spanish dancer and a Spanish vixen. But she was unbelievably inept.

"I wish I had the courage and the kindliness to give you a Belasco training," he said. "You know, he testified in court that when he trained Mrs. Leslie Carter for her big war-horse rôles, he had to break her muscle-bound condition first. He threw her down stairs, throttled her, beat her head against the wall and chased her about the room. She told me herself that she learned the Declaration of Independence by heart and spent hours and hours repeating it as glibly as she could. Every time she missed an articulation, she went back to the beginning and recited it all over again—hundreds and hundreds of times. That's how she learned to deliver great tirades with a breathless rush, yet made every syllable distinct. That's how she learned how to charge about the stage like a lioness."

"To be a great actress is no easy job. You've got to work like a fiend, or you'll get nowhere. You've got to exercise your arms and legs and your voice and your soul. If you will, you've got a big future. If you won't, you'll slump along, playing small parts till you lose your bloom of youth; then you'll slip into character parts and go out like an old candle."

Remember was beginning to wear out,

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to understand the joys of a pleasant housewifely career, the luxuries of obscurity. But Claymore hated to give her up. He made one more desperate effort to unleash her soul and her body from the shackles of respectability.

He set her to denouncing the tarpaulin villain again. He made her pour out before that heap of wrinkles a story of shame and disprized devotion and degradation. He put her against the wall and made her beat upon it and lament her turpitude. He made her fling herself to the floor and pound it with her fists and laugh in mockery. Then he made her draw the screw-driver and fire five shots into her canvas betrayer.

Her imagination flagged so dismally in this scene that he decreed the screw-driver a stiletto and made her stab the man to death. He laughed at the blow she dealt and forced her to slash and stab and drive the blade home until she fell down exhausted with the vain effort to be a murderess.

Claymore was as exhausted as she, and he wasted no film on taking pictures of her failure.

"Let's go to lunch!" he said. "We've earned a bit of chow."

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE upshot of this ordeal by fire was that Remember was recognized as a star yet to be made—if indeed her nebulous ambitions should ever be condensed into solid achievement.

Claymore felt that she had a future. He told her so. But he told her that a period of hard labor lay between her and that paradise. He compared the development of an artist with the slow human miracle that had rescued so much of California from the grim bleakness of the desert, the desert that yields and reconquers, retreats and returns.

Claymore talked to Remember of herself and her body as frankly as a father confessor dissects a soul before a believer's eyes. She was thrilled with the almost morbid sensation of being the subject of such remorseless analysis. She was like one of the victims of the new-fashioned operations by local anesthesia who sits up and in a mood of hysterical fascination chats with the surgeon even while he slashes the skin open, lays bare the nerves and arteries and opens the deep penetralia of the temple.

The director asked her if she would practice at home what he had told her and shown her on the stage, and then some day let him give her another test. She consented with delight, and appointed the morrow as the nearest day there was. She had only one somber thought, that she must go home again without a promise of work, with neither income of money nor outgo of art to expect.

But Claymore asked her to wait while he spoke to Mr. Bermond. She loitered on the green lawn watching the made-up actors and the extra people and the others moving about their tasks. Some day they would gaze at her with respect and whisper: "That's Miss Steddon, the great star."

By and by Mr. Bermond came out bare-headed to see her. He had a way of meet-



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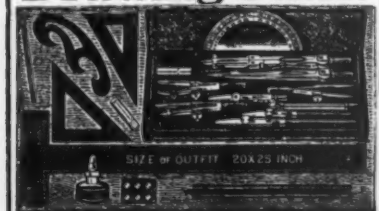
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ing candidates out of doors. It was easier to remember an engagement and dash away, than to pry the more tenacious ones out of his office chairs.

Bermond shook Remember's hand warmly and said with as much enthusiasm as if he were the beneficiary of her hopes—as of course he might be:

"Well, Mr. Claymore tells me you have much talent. That's fine! But he says your work is spotty—immature. You have little technique. But that's all right. Everybody has to learn. He has a small part in his picture, and if you want to take it, all right. The part wont stand much money, but you will get experience, and that's what you want—yes?"

Remember could have hugged him. He was beautiful as the dawning sun on the hills of night. Later she would come to hate him and fight him as a miser, a penny-squeezer, a slave-driver; but so Christopher Columbus, and Cortes, were regarded after their brief moments of beauty as discoverers.

Bermond was a believer in "new faces." He had found that the audiences would forgive immaturity of art rather than maturity of figure when it had to choose. The part he offered Remember was a rôle of girlish pathos with a wistful note and a few moments of village tragedy. She could adorn the screen without being able to do much damage to the story at worst.

Remember felt that in passing from director to director she was undergoing a series of spiritual marriages and divorces. There were such intense emotional communions that it was far more than a mere acquaintance. But before she left the lot that day, she had signed her name to a long document which she pretended to read and understand. About all she made of it was that she was to have a salary of fifty dollars a week during the taking of the picture, and that the company might exercise an option on her services thereafter if it chose.

Mr. Tirrey was delighted in a paternal fashion. It was a sunbeam in his dark day when he could open the door to youth and hope.

Remember went home elated, and was greeted so royally that she forgot how diminished her hopes were from the immediate stardom she had imagined under Claymore's first frenzy.

THE next day the star of the picture arrived on the set, wearing a hat. When Claymore told her that she was not to wear it during the scene, she exclaimed that her hair was not dressed. There was nothing to do but send her to the coiffeuse. This meant a delay of an hour. The company and the throng of extras and the crew must lie idle at the cost of nearly a thousand dollars to the picture.

The company's disaster was Remember's good luck, for Claymore, seeing her lurking in the background waiting for instructions, called her over to him. Everything was set for a test and he dismissed the rest of the company for an early lunch, while he sent Remember through her paces again.

He had a canvas partition drawn round a corner of the scene and once more put Remember at bay against a wall with

a camera and a nest of light-machines leveled at her.

She had spent the evening before at mad soiritual gymnastics in the bungalow with her mother and Leva as audience and critics. Claymore found that her soul was wakening and her limbs throwing off their inertia. He set her problems in mental arithmetic like a tutor coaching a backward pupil for an examination. It was an exceedingly curious method of getting acquainted. Teacher and student became as much involved in each other's souls as Abélard and Héloïse at their first sessions.

When the star came back with her hair appropriately laundered, ironed and crimped, and the rest of the company gathered, Remember could see that Claymore gave up his task with her reluctantly. And that sent a shaft of sweet fire through her heart.

LATE in the afternoon Claymore offered her a lift home in his automobile. It was quicker than the street-car, but it seemed far quicker than that. They chattered volubly of art theories and practices. They did not realize how long the car stood in front of her bungalow before Remember got out, or how long he waited after she got out, talking, talking, before he bade her the final good night.

Her mother realized it, peering through the curtains; and Leva exclaimed:

"Good Lord, the minx has the director eating out of her hand already. She'll get on!"

She said this to Remember when the girl came skipping into the house, and shocked her with a glimpse of how their high spiritual relations looked to the bystander.

Leva taunted her all evening, and the next morning called after her as she set out to school:

"Aren't you going to take a big red apple to teacher?"

Remember took him two of them in her crimson cheeks.

And now the peril began that Tirrey had warned her of. She had met none of that traditional demand for her honor as an admittance fee to the art. Tirrey had refused her flat. Bermond had not invited her to love him; and Claymore had talked nothing but art. Yet now that she was on the inside of Thibet, she found that love was laying his nets about her in his ancient fashion, though the springes were new.

Claymore occasionally gave her a scene with an actor as a foil, talked to her of the arts of embracing, kissing, fondling, rebuking, accepting, denouncing, battling. But sometimes he seemed to take more than a professional interest in the demonstrations. Sometimes he drew her arms about himself, and she felt that even if he did not clench her tight or hold her long, he wanted to.

The camera-man, the dawdling light-crew and the props and grips were chaperons, but they were becoming as unimportant as the scenery. Sometimes she thought they were aware of a something in the atmosphere. Perhaps she caught a glance shot from one to another, or an eye turned away a little too indifferently. But that only enhanced the excitement,

and on one occasion when Claymore tried to teach her bigness of wrath and compelled her to scream and strike at him, there was such an undertone of affection in the pretense of hate that she felt fairly wrenched apart.

Remember met Tom Holby on the lot one day. He had been asked to come over and talk of a possible contract with the Bermond company. He greeted Remember with effusive enthusiasm, and she warmed at the pride of his recognition. Then she felt a little twinge of conscience—an intuition that she had no right to be so glad to see Mr. Holby, since now she belonged to Mr. Claymore.

This was an amazing and slavish reversion to primeval submissiveness for an emancipated woman. But there was a tang of wild comfort in the feeling that she was owned. And then she wondered if she did not owe the priority to Mr. Holby. This was a complication!

For the present, however, Remember had no greater anxiety than the peculiarly masked flirtation with her director and the battles with little artistic problems as they arose. Her life had regularity again. She got up of mornings with a task before her. She had hours of waiting for every minute of acting, but she was one of the company, and she could study the work of others. Her textbooks were the faces of the actors and actresses, the directions of the directors.

One day when a little scene was being filmed in which she was the only actress, the rest of the company being excused for a change of costume, a visitor from overseas was brought upon the set, a great French general. The publicity man, whose lust for space never slept, suggested that the general might like to be photographed on the scene. He laughed and came forward with a boyish eagerness. He displayed at once a terror he had not revealed under bombardment. On one side of him stood the director, on the other Remember thrilled and thrilling.

The "still" camera-man took several pictures and the incident was over. The general kissed Remember's hand and left her almost aswoon with pride. The publicity man gave her one of the pictures, and she set it up on her mantel as a trophy of her glory.

Whether the general really said it or really meant it, only the publicity man knew; but when the picture appeared in newspaper supplements about the world, it was stated under each of the pictures that the great warrior had said that "Remember Steddon was the prettiest girl in America."

More amazing yet, Remember first learned of this astounding tribute from her astounded father.

SOON after Remember began to feel a pride in her art and to take home to her mother little compliments she had heard, and to feel that she was launched at last upon the illimitable sea of the greatest as well as the newest of arts, and the most superb of all livelihoods, a storm broke upon the moving-picture world. An actor involved in a dull revel, of a sort infinitely frequent since mankind first encountered alcohol, was present at the death of an actress. The first ver-

We sold her first story to Thomas H. Ince

Yet ELIZABETH THATCHER never dreamed she could write for the screen until we tested her story telling ability. Will you send for the same test, FREE?

ELIZABETH THATCHER is a Montana housewife. So far as she could see there was nothing that made her different from thousands of other housewives.

But she wrote a successful photoplay. And Thomas H. Ince, the great producer, was glad to buy it—the first she ever tried to write.

"I had never tried to write for publication or the screen," she said in a letter to the Palmer Photoplay Corporation. "In fact, I had no desire to write until I saw your advertisement."

This is what caught her eye in the advertisement:

"Anyone with imagination and good story ideas can learn to write Photoplays."

She clipped a coupon like the one at the bottom of this page, and received a remarkable questionnaire. Through this test, she indicated that she possessed natural story-telling ability, and proved herself acceptable for the training course of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation.

And Thomas H. Ince bought her first attempt

Only a few weeks after her enrollment, we sold Mrs. Thatcher's first story to Mr. Ince. With Mr. Ince's check in her hands, Mrs. Thatcher wrote:

"I feel that such success as I have had is directly due to the Palmer Course and your constructive help."

Can you do what Mrs. Thatcher did? Can you, too, write a photoplay that we can sell? Offhand you will be inclined to answer No. But the question is too important to be answered offhand. You owe it to yourself to make in your own home the fascinating test of creative imagination and story-telling ability which revealed Mrs. Thatcher's unsuspected talent to her. **Send for the Van Loan questionnaire**

The test is a questionnaire prepared by H. H. Van Loan, the celebrated photoplaywright, and Prof. Malcolm MacLean, former teacher of short-story writing at Northwestern University. If you have any story-telling instinct at all, send for this questionnaire and find out for yourself just how much talent you have.

We shall be frank with you. The Palmer Photoplay Corporation exists first of all to **sell photoplays**. It trains photoplay



writers in order that it may have more photoplays to sell.

With the active aid and encouragement of the leading producers, the Corporation is literally combing the country for new screen writers. Its Department of Education was organized to produce the writers who can produce the stories. The Palmer institution is the industry's accredited agent for getting the stories without which production of motion pictures cannot go on. Producers are glad to pay from \$500 to \$2,000 for good stories.

Not for "born writers" but for story-tellers

The acquired art of fine writing cannot be transferred to the screen. The same producer who bought Mrs. Thatcher's first story has rejected the work of scores of famous novelists and magazine writers. They lacked the kind of talent suited for screen expression. Mrs. Thatcher, and hundreds of others who are not professional writers, have that gift.

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation cannot endow you with such a gift. But we can discover it, if it exists. And we can teach you how to employ it for your lasting enjoyment and profit.

We invite you to apply this free test

Clip the coupon below, and we shall send you the Van Loan questionnaire. You will assume no obligation. If you pass the test, we shall send you interesting material descriptive of the Palmer course and Service, and admit you to enrollment, should you choose to develop your talent. If you cannot pass this test, we shall frankly advise you to give up the idea of writing for the screen. It will be a waste of their time and ours for children to apply.

Will you give this questionnaire a little of your time? It may mean fame and fortune to you. In any event, it will satisfy you as to whether or not you should attempt to enter this fascinating and highly profitable field. Just use the coupon below and do it now before you forget.

With the questionnaire we will send you a free sample copy of The Photodramatist, the Photoplaywright's Magazine.

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Photoplay Magazine

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124 West 4th St. Los Angeles, Cal.**



PLEASE send me, without cost or obligation on my part, your questionnaire. I will answer the questions in it and return it to you for analysis. If I pass the test, I am to receive further information about your Course and Service. Also send free sample copy of the Photo-dramatist.

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When the winds blow raw and chill and rheumatism starts to tingle in your joints and muscles, get out your good friend Musterole.

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Don't wait for trouble, keep a jar or tube on the bathroom shelf.

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No matter how serious your deformity, no matter what treatments you have tried, think of the thousands of sufferers this method has made well and happy. We will prove the value of the Philo Burt Method in your own case.

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Since you run no risk there is no reason why you should not accept our offer at once.

The photographs here show how light, cool, elastic and easily adjustable the Philo Burt Appliance is—how different from the old torturing plaster, leather or steel jackets. To weakened or deformed spines it brings almost immediate relief even in the most serious cases. You owe it to yourself to investigate it thoroughly. The price is within reach of all.

Send for our Free Book today and describe the nature and condition of your trouble as fully as possible so we can give you definite information.

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sions of the disaster were so horrible that the nation was shaken. All the simmering resentment against the evil elements and ugly excesses of the "fifth largest industry in the world" boiled over in a scalding denunciation of the entire motion-picture populace.

For a week or two the nation rose in one mob to lynch an entire craft and all its folk.

Remember's father had been one of the loyal loathers of the moving pictures, and he surprised himself in the Jeremiad he launched at his little congregation back in Calverly. A newspaper man happened to be present, and he published a column of Dr. Steddon's remarks. The proud father sent a clipping to his wife and daughter, never dreaming that the moving pictures were furnishing them their bread and butter, boots and beatitudes.

They covered before the blast and understood the emotions of Adam and Eve after they had eaten of the tree of knowledge and heard the Voice in the garden.

They debated the hateful problem of confessing the truth, but could not bring themselves yet awhile to the disclosure of their fraud.

And then a letter came from the man they loved and dreaded. As Mrs. Steddon's fingers opened the envelope in the

awkwardness of guilt, two pictures fell to the floor. They were in the brown rotogravure of the Sunday supplements. They were alike except in size; one was from the New York Times and one from the Chicago Tribune. Both presented Remember standing at the side of the French general. Both stated that he had called this promising member of the Bermond Company "the prettiest girl in America."

Remember and her mother read the letter together. It began without any "Dear Wife" or "Dear Daughter." It read:

The enclosed clippings were sent to me by members of my congregation who were sojourning, one in New York and one in Chicago. It is hard for me to doubt the witness of my eyes, but it is almost harder to believe that the wife of my bosom and the daughter reared in the shelter of our home could have fallen so low so suddenly. Before I write more, I want to hear the truth from both of you, if you can and will tell it.

And now what course was left for Remember and her mother? Were the walls closing in about them? What was to happen next? Read the March installment of this great novel and see for yourself.

MAMSELLE CHÉRIE

(Continued from page 61)

better. She seemed to have glimpses of shadowy recesses in his spirit.

And Bruce had kissed her. He would have to pay for that.

It was almost two o'clock when she drove into Seventy-eighth Street. With some amazement she noticed the lights in the upstairs windows of the Mohun house and the group of strange automobiles before the door. Hurriedly she bade her companion good night and took out her latchkey. But the door opened, and a man hurried out.

"What is it?" she asked. "I'm Miss Mohun."

"Oh, Miss Mohun! I'm Dr. Heathcote, a consultant on this case. Your father—very ill—paralysis."

CHAPTER X

JOHN CHICHESTER'S revelations about Mohun's affairs—so intimately connected with his own—were a severe blow to David Sangree, and his subsequent conversations with George Lycett provided little comfort to either

man. Both of them sold Textile Mills in small lots, but the market continued to fall, and with the crash of the Mohun house, all that remained of Sangree's respectable fortune was about fifteen thousand dollars in cash and a house far uptown which yielded him a small sum monthly.

Despite the difficulties before Sangree,—the upset of his personal plans for the future, and the obvious and immediate necessity of finding some employment which would eke out a very slender income,—he found himself thinking of the terrible situation which now confronted his young friend Cherry. And the second day after the failure he found himself walking toward her house.

At the house on Seventy-eighth Street Sangree sent up his card, and in a moment Cherry came down. She stood for a moment poised in the doorway, searching the dim shadows of the room for his familiar figure. More than the lights, he had always liked the shadows in her face; and today they had a clearer definition. He thought her pallid, and her eyes weary with watching; her voice was pitched in a low key as though in recognition of some valid restraint. And she came forward treading softly, her smile rather wistful, as she addressed him by his chosen title.

"Hello, Rameses," she said quietly. "I'm so glad you came."

"Cherry! You poor child!"

He had not called her by her Christian name before, but to Sangree it seemed that he must always have done so.

She smiled a little as she took his extended hands, touched by his emotion.

"THE EYE OF THE TEMPLE"

That is the alluring title—fraught with mystery—of the story that has been written for this magazine by JACK BOYLE, whose Chino-American stories are among the most successful ones we have ever published. It will appear in an early issue of—

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

"I thought you wouldn't mind my coming here to tell you how sorry I am about your father's misfortunes—and yours."

"It's very sweet of you. Do sit down—here." She indicated the divan in the corner. "It's all very sad, of course. Father seems better, but it's going to be a long affair. God knows whether he'll ever be fit for anything again. They do give us hope, but then—they would. It's a thing they do." Her fingers in her lap clenched nervously at her handkerchief. "If you could only see him!" she went on. "Poor dear—twisted so pitifully. And he always seemed so strong—so vital." Her voice fell a note lower to conceal its trembling, as though she were ashamed of a weakness.

"There's nothing I can do? It would be a great privilege to be able to help him or you."

"No. Nothing. Everything is being done. Everyone has been very kind to Mother—to us all. But nobody seems to know much about the—the other thing—the business. It's almost as though they were afraid to talk about it, as though they wanted to hide from us how bad it is. Poor Dad! And he always worked so long and so hard, while we—"

Her voice broke in a quick, sobbing gasp.

"Poor Cherry!" he found himself muttering again as he laid his fingers over hers. But the touch of his hand seemed suddenly to let loose the forces of her own self-scorn.

"Don't pity me!" The words came bursting forth in a rush while she struggled for self-command. "Not me. I won't be pitied." Her voice broke again. "None of us needs to be pitied but Father—none of us." She went on almost fiercely: "He tried so hard—suffered for months under this terrible strain, while we—we were too selfish to notice him—when we might have helped."

SHE halted for breath, both hands on her breasts as she tried to calm herself.

"Don't, Cherry," he broke in, alarmed at the signs of hysteria. "How could you have known?"

"I ought to have known, if I—I hadn't been so wrapped in my own pursuits. Hadn't I seen him coming home at night dead beat, so tired and gray-looking? Why shouldn't I have known if I had loved him? I ought to have guessed. He didn't tell us his troubles. He wasn't that sort. Perhaps he didn't think we were worthy of knowing. I understand now what was in his mind. We weren't worthy. He knew that we weren't."

"Please, Cherry—"

"Let me talk. I've wanted to talk to some one. Let me tell you. I've got to speak to some one. I can't speak to them. I couldn't reproach them at such a time when I was more to blame even than they." She made a swift motion of protest as he began to speak. "No, don't try to make things easier for me. You can't. I know what I ought to have done. I understood him better than—I mean, I was close to him in many ways. There must have been times when he wanted me, and didn't tell me so because he

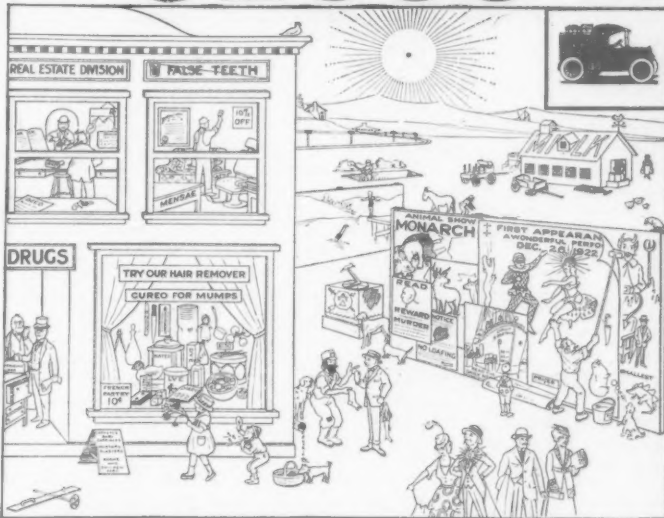
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15 CASH Prizes

Larger Copies of Picture Sent Free



FIND ALL THE OBJECTS BEGINNING WITH "D"

IN the picture are a number of objects beginning with "D" like dog, darky, devil, etc. See how many you can find. The person who sends in the largest, nearest correct list of "D" words wins first prize, \$20.00. Of course you would rather compete for the larger cash prizes that we have offered to introduce our new order, De Do, as used in our new toilet preparations

RULES OF CONTEST

1. It costs nothing to enter. Anybody not connected with this company or a relative of any member of our organization may compete.
2. Number words 1, 2, 3, etc. Write only on one side of paper. Place your name and address on each sheet.
3. Use only words found in English dictionary, no obsolete, hyphenated or compound words count. Use singular or plural, not both. Do not use same word more than once, even to designate entirely different objects.
4. List having largest, nearest correct list of visible objects shown in picture beginning with "D" wins first prize, next, second, etc. Nothing else counts.
5. Do not name any object more than once. Any part of object may be named in addition to object as a whole.
6. Only one prize to a family, or to number of group working together.
7. In event of ties duplicate prizes will be paid to each tying contestant.
8. Three well known men, none having any connection with this company, will act as judges and each contestant agrees to accept their decision as final. These are the judges: Mr. C. C. Strubbers, Cashier, Union State Bank; Mr. H. M. Leighton, Contractor, Ex-Proc. Board Education; Mr. Geo. F. Womrath, Bus. Agt. Mpls. Board Education.
9. All answers will receive equal consideration whether accompanied by purchase or not.
10. At the close of the contest a printed list of the correct "D" words and the names of the winners will be sent to all contestants who make purchases.
11. All answers must be mailed before post office closing time February 15th, 1922.

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A \$1.00 purchase—see list of offers—makes your answer to the picture eligible for the \$500.00 prize; a \$2.00 purchase makes it eligible for the \$1,000.00 prize, and a \$5.00 purchase makes it eligible for the \$2,500.00 prize. We are offering a small fortune, more than the average person can save in a lifetime, to make everybody acquainted with these delightful preparations for the toilet.

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First prize....	\$20.00	\$500.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,500.00
Second prize....	10.00	250.00	500.00	1,250.00
Third prize....	5.00	125.00	250.00	625.00
Fourth prize....	5.00	75.00	150.00	375.00
Fifth prize....	5.00	50.00	100.00	250.00
Sixth prize....	3.00	40.00	80.00	200.00
Seventh prize....	3.00	30.00	60.00	150.00
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thought that he might interfere with my pleasure. I ought to have known that too. And I didn't. I rarely saw him. There were times, I know, when I might have made it easier for him in a thousand ways—little ways that a man understands—big ways that might have saved him. And I—I didn't."

Her voice quivered with pain.

"He wanted me. He called for me when he was stricken—after he had crawled home like some poor sick animal to die. Good God! He called for me, and I wasn't there. I was—"

Strength, courage, self-command no longer served her, for she broke, all the reserve forces of her long hours of tireless watching yielding to the strain of sudden emotion. She bent forward beside him, her head in her arms upon the cushion, in a passion of self-abasement.

Few men know what to do with a woman in tears, and Sangree stared at her for a moment of embarrassment. Then with a quick impulse he leaned forward and put his arm around her gently, while he whispered at her ear.

"Don't, Cherry! Don't!"

A murmur came from the sanctuary of her arms.

"Let me—let me. It's what I—what I've wanted to do."

And so he sat inert a moment, watching her, only the tips of his fingers still moving timidly on her arm. In a while the spasm passed, and she was silent and motionless, though still bent away from him. It made him contented to know that alone with him she could throw her pride to the winds.

He knew that until the storm had passed, it was best that he should say nothing. In a while she sat up, dabbing at her eyes with a handkerchief, while Sangree watched her, waiting. He saw her take a timid glance at him, but what she saw in his eyes must have satisfied her, for the corner of her mouth flickered in a smile, as she raised her chin resolutely. "You didn't think, did you, Rameses," she said with a touch of her old humor, "that when you called you were in for thunder, lightning and a deluge? You think me a silly little fool?"

"No. No! God knows I don't," he blurted out.

SHE brushed her wrist across her swollen eyes. All of Cherry's gestures were significant. This one had the unconscious grace of a child's.

"I must tell you the rest," she murmured. "Dad didn't like me driving at night with boys and dancing in public places. He told me so often, but I always laughed him off—and did as I pleased. Poor Dad! I didn't know that perhaps he might want me for himself once in a while. He always seemed so busy. . . . But I oughtn't to have gone against his wishes. It didn't matter so much about the people Dad knew and liked—like Dicky and Harold and—and you, Rameses. But I did go, often, with—with others." She bent her head to her hands again and breathed deep, lowering her voice so that it was scarcely audible. "Why, the very night that Father had his seizure, I was out joy-riding, dining, dancing with Bruce Cowan—"

"Ah," said Sangree, "Cowan." And then calmly: "And what of that?"

"Oh, can't you see what I mean?" she gasped. "Dancing—jazz at a road house—the Red Horse. It wasn't what he would have liked. And while I was dancing, he was suffering—wanting me—or somebody who really would understand him—to help him in the hour of his trouble—somebody of his own, to—" She broke off with a despairing gesture. "Oh, not just this time only, but all the time—months and months—when I might have tried to understand something of the desperate condition of his mind—of his body, instead of spending money—buying anything I wanted. All of us did—clothes, jewelry, flowers, the fearful expenses of my coming out, the dances, suppers, the opera—it all might have done something to save him. I didn't think—none of us did—of him. It's gone on for years—for years." She bent forward, her chin in her hands, staring at the portrait of Alicia Mohun by a fashionable painter which faced her on the opposite wall. "Oh, God," she half-whispered, "how I hate myself!"

Sangree couldn't resist the thought that unconsciously Cherry included Alicia Mohun in the denunciation. For the portrait, singularly clever, had been painted by a man trained to catch the superficial beauties of his sitters, and Alicia Mohun had possessed many of those. But Sangree had read through Cherry's confession her loyalty to her mother. They had all been to blame, perhaps, but less than if the husband and father had taken his family into his confidence. And briefly, Sangree told her so.

"Oh, you're trying to make things easier for me," she said. "You would. But I don't want things made easier. I want to look my life face to face. Oh, I've done some thinking since this awful thing happened. It's a pity I hadn't done it before." She turned toward him brightly. "You know, Rameses," she said with a short laugh, "you did tell me once that I had a mind to think with if I wanted to. Well, I've been thinking. And there's more thinking to come. For what the devil is going to happen to us all, I don't know. I'm afraid things are pretty bad. You don't know anything about the business, do you?"

Sangree was silent for a moment. But to him there seemed no use in evading the issue. More, even, than Cherry, he knew that short of a miracle to improve the condition of the business of the country, there was little chance of a restitution of James Mohun's affairs.

"First let me ask—has your mother any private income of her own?"

"No, none. All the money came from Dad."

"That's too bad," he muttered. "I do know something about the business. You see," he explained with his slow smile, "almost all the money that I possessed was in Textile Mills."

"Everything! You!" she gasped. "I can't believe it."

"Oh, I shan't starve," he said with a laugh, "—any more than you will. I'm only telling you, because you'd find it out later."

"Oh, Dr. Sangree!" she cried again.

"My name is David," he put in with

his whimsical smile. "Since misery loves company, it might as well enjoy the terms of familiarity."

"Of course—David. But I hadn't thought—that there were others. . . . Of course there must be. Oh, it's all too ghastly."

"But there's no use crying over it. Now, is there?"

"No, I won't cry again."

"Then I'll tell you the truth as far as I know it. You see, I've a great belief in your courage. I think you're going to need it. You mustn't count on anything from your father's business. Unless he has securities that no one knows about, there won't be anything."

"I suspected that," she said bravely, "because no one would speak—"

"But haven't you a lawyer—some one to advise your mother?"

"Mr. Pennington, yes. But she won't see him—or anyone. She just paces the floor of her room upstairs, or lies on the bed and moans. She's so helpless. It's all that I can do to fight the hopelessness of the whole situation."

"And Jack, your brother?"

"Oh, he will do anything he can. He has come around splendidly, but he's so young, so untrained—like me."

SANGREE was silent for a moment, frowning. "See here, Cherry," he said at last soberly, "I'm no lawyer. And you might gather from the result of my investments that I'm no business man. Perhaps I'm not even practical. But I thought I'd like you to know that I'd do anything in the world to try and help you. I want you to remember that. Will you?"

"Yes—yes."

"Of course there will be others—many others to advise you. But whatever happens, I want to be sure that you'll let me keep my particular little niche in your regard, that you'll send for me when I can help in any way—money even—"

"No, not money. But I do want you." She put her fingers over his for a moment. "I've shown you that today. Haven't I?"

He took her fingers to his lips and rose.

"It has made me very happy," he said with an aspect of formality which he assumed to cover his awkwardness, "to think that you've thought me worthy of your confidences."

She smiled mistily.

"Good old Rameses!" she said gently. "Thanks for coming. I'll remember."

"Anything," he repeated with a sober grin, "even to riding wild horses."

She looked at him reproachfully, but he was still smiling as he went out at the door.

"Good-by, Cherry," he said cheerfully. "And buck up!"

"I will. Good-by, my friend."

After he had gone, she stood for a long moment watching the doorway where he had been, a puzzled little wrinkle at her brows.

The next installment of this fascinating story of young America today brings it to specially interesting episodes. Watch for it in the forthcoming March issue of THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE.

The Picture He Carries Away

Will it be an alluring image of charm and freshness, or the pitying recollection of a pretty girl made unattractive by a poor complexion?



Of all the features men admire, a beautiful skin comes first. No girl can hope for much attention when hers is blotchy and coarse in texture.

Since a few weeks' scientific treatment will remedy such defects, no girl should be discouraged. It is within every woman's power to have and keep a smooth, fine, clear skin, radiant with the charm of health and freshness.

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Cleansing lather must be massaged into the skin. Use your hands, gently patting and rubbing. Rinse thoroughly, still with your hands, for a wash cloth may roughen or irritate.

Do this before you go to bed and apply cold

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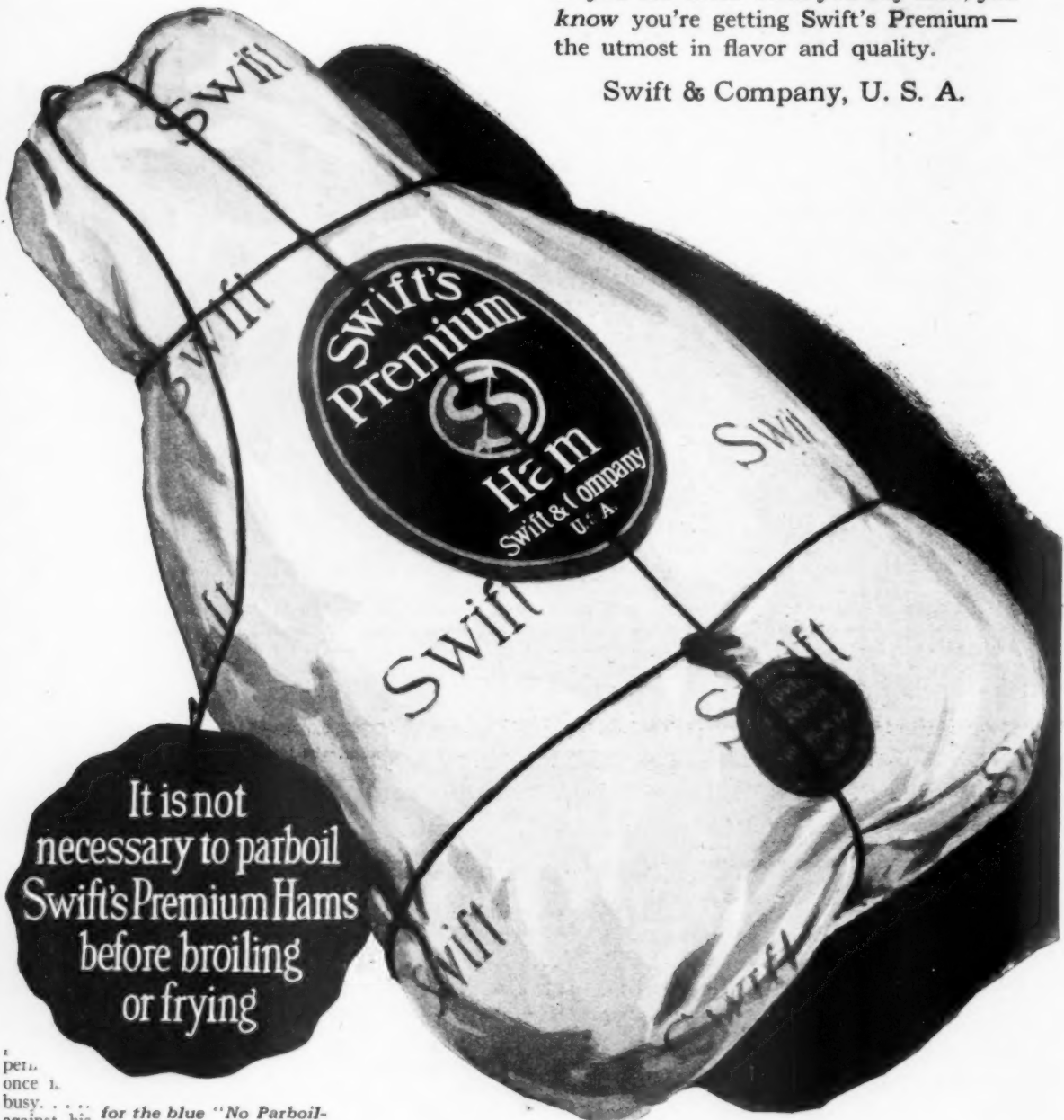
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Swift's Premium Ham is always wrapped in printed parchment as shown here. It always bears this distinctive label and tag. If you see these when you buy ham, you know you're getting Swift's Premium—the utmost in flavor and quality.

Swift & Company, U. S. A.



It is not necessary to parboil Swift's Premium Hams before broiling or frying

perilous once I was busy. . . . for the blue "No Parboil-against his much about 18, when you buy a whole liked—like Dick when you buy a slice you, Rameses. —with others. her hands again, ering her voice s audible. "Why, Father had his seiz- riding, dining, dancing an—"

Be sure it's Premium

